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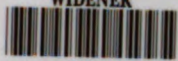
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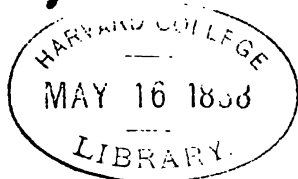
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IF the year 1796 was comparatively barren of great events, that which followed was unusually full of such ; and those too of a most chequered character. Not, indeed, that we failed to triumph over every foreign enemy ; not that Spaniards, Dutch, and French, were not all compelled in turn to acknowledge our superiority by the defeat of splendid fleets, by witnessing the bombardment of their towns, and the destruction of their ships on their own coasts or in their own harbours, without being able as a counterpoise to these losses to boast of a single success of more importance than the capture of a gunbrig. But danger, and difficulty, and disgrace, came upon us from a quarter where we least expected it : from the disaffection of the very sailors who won us those triumphs, which now broke out in open mutiny among our fleets in every



quarter of the globe ; imperilling not only the success of a single campaign but our very existence as a maritime power. Yet by the wisdom of our Government and officers in authority, mingling timely conciliation with needful firmness and severity, even this calamity was surmounted; and only furnished an additional proof of the inexhaustible resources of the country, and of the fitness of its people for empire ; and also a warning of the impolicy as well as of the injustice of disregarding well-founded complaints, merely because they are urged with moderation (a circumstance which ought rather to procure them a more attentive hearing,) and of allowing grievances to become intolerable because it is believed that those who suffer are too loyal and too dutiful to do more than complain.

Nelson's work at Elba was shortened by the objection entertained by General de Burgh to the removal of the troops. He therefore, as has been said already, contented himself with taking away the naval stores, and also with victualling and so arranging the transports which he left behind him that the General should be able to embark every soldier in the briefest possible time whenever he should think himself justified in so doing. Having done this, he made all haste to rejoin the Admiral, knowing that the Spanish fleet was not far from him, and consequently hoping that a battle could not be very distant. It was the 25th of January before he weighed anchor from Porto Ferajo ; but though somewhat encumbered with the store-ships which he was conducting to Gibraltar, he went a little out of his way to reconnoitre Toulon and Carthagená, rightly judging it of great importance to Jervis to know the state of things in those harbours. Carthagená he found empty, and when, on the 11th of February, he passed through the Straits, he discovered that he was in the rear of the Spanish fleet, which had quitted that harbour a week

before, and was now moving slowly up the coast. The *Minerve* was chased by two of their line-of-battle ships, and was in no small danger of being taken. By his usual mixture of audacity and presence of mind with the most consummate seamanship he frightened the leading seventy-four out of attacking him till she should be joined by her consort, secured his escape, and with every sail set pressed on to carry tidings of the hostile fleet to the commander-in-chief. Happily, while he was in the Mediterranean, Jervis had been joined by Admiral Parker with five sail of the line and a frigate; and having quitted the Tagus three weeks before, he was sailing at a leisurely pace down the Portuguese coast, when, on the morning of the 13th, Nelson brought him the long expected and wished-for tidings of the approach of the enemy.

Yet none but an English sailor would have considered such intelligence matter for rejoicing. The exact strength of the Spaniards Nelson had not discovered: but it was known to exceed twenty sail of the line; and not only had Jervis but fifteen with him, but two of those had been greatly injured by a collision which had taken place in the preceding night. The *Colossus* and *Culloden* had run against one another: the former had stove in her upper works, and carried away a top-gallant mast; the latter had been so injured that almost any officer but Troubridge, her captain, would have considered her disabled. So unwilling however was Troubridge to allow a temporary absence from the fleet to deprive him of his share in the triumph which he foresaw, that, instead of returning to port, he repaired his ship as best he could where she lay, and had hardly reported her fit for service when his energy was rewarded by Nelson's arrival. Jervis at once ordered Nelson to shift his pendant back to the Captain, and made the signal to prepare for action, and to keep in close order. More than once during the night that followed, the signal-guns of the Spaniards were heard; and long before day-

break a Portuguese frigate, under a British captain of the name of Campbell, spoke the *Victory*, Jervis's flagship, and reported them to be about four leagues to windward. At this time we were somewhat to the south-west of the great promontory known as Cape St. Vincent; and the Spaniards, who had hitherto been prevented by an easterly wind from getting into Cadiz, which was their object when they sailed from Carthagena, were not disinclined to meet us; being ignorant of the reinforcement which the British Admiral had received, and consequently believing that he had not more than ten or eleven ships at most under his orders. During the night of the 13th, however, the wind changed towards the south-west; and, preferring a strict obedience to his orders to a battle with even so unequal an antagonist as he believed Jervis to be, the Spanish Commander-in-chief, Don Josef de Cordova, began to make sail in no very regular order towards Cadiz. When day broke, his fleet was seen by our frigates about five miles off; the main body huddled together in a confused group, with one squadron at some distance to leeward, and all steering towards the south-east, the wind now being west by south. As we drew near enough to be able to count them and to distinguish their character, it was seen that it was indeed a formidable host that lay before us. One vast four-decker, the *Santissima Trinidad*, 130, bearing Cordova's flag; six three-deckers, of 112 guns each; two 80-gun ships; and eighteen seventy-fours composed it: while our fleet that was advancing to attack it had scarcely half the number of ships or of guns. Two ships of a hundred guns, three of ninety-eight, one of ninety, eight seventy-fours, and a sixty-four were the force which Sir John Jervis was now leading down upon it; trusting to the skill of himself and his officers, the experienced readiness of his seamen, the fiery and at the same time unyielding valour of all, to counterbalance the prodigious disproportion of force. In one respect his reliance was more fully justified than he

was aware of: the Spanish crews, though generally more numerous than our own according to the rating of each ship, were composed, to a very great extent, of raw levies ; many soldiers wholly unused to the sea, many landsmen unaccustomed to both sea and war, having been pressed on board in the hurry with which the fleet had been manned. Such men were for the most part unable to perform the most ordinary duties of seamen ; and it is even recorded of some of them, that being ordered during the action to go aloft in order to repair the rigging, they fell on their knees, begging to be allowed to stay and be shot where they were rather than be compelled to break their necks by falling off the yards in the performance of evolutions which they had never attempted in their lives. Not that the Spanish crews were wholly composed of such materials. Each ship had on board a portion of hardy and experienced seamen : while the officers, whether practised or unpractised in naval manœuvres, fought with a gallantry equal to anything but a combat with their British antagonists. It was their ill fate that on this occasion they were opposed to the very flower of the British navy. It so happened, indeed, that the subordinate admirals, Thompson, Waldegrave, and Parker, never had had an opportunity of earning any especial distinction in fight against the enemy, though all were able and brave men ; but among the captains, not to mention Nelson, whose reputation was already equal to that of any admiral in the service, were many of those men who throughout the whole war were, of all their compeers, the greatest objects of pride to their country, and of dread to its enemies ; and who were about to give to both ample cause for such feelings in the achievements of this day. Collingwood, who had been undeservedly passed over in the rewards given for Lord Howe's victory, commanded the Excellent ; Troubridge, second only to Nelson himself for audacity, for resource, for indefatigable energy, was leading the fleet

in the Culloden, which, as has been already mentioned, his own unrivalled exertions had alone enabled to take her part in the coming battle; Saumarez, whose nautical skill as well as warlike gallantry had been already displayed on more than one occasion, and for whom Fate had one remarkable triumph in store in separate command, was captain of the *Orion*, Frederick had the *Blenheim*, Sutton the *Egmont*, Towry the little 64-gun *Diadem*; while the captain of the fleet was an officer who, though he has not escaped the imputation of having given injudicious and perhaps ungenerous advice in reference to this battle, was a brave and able seaman, Captain Robert Calder; who in later years, as will be mentioned hereafter, won a victory over the French against great odds, and was received at home with a severity which entitles him to be looked upon as with, the single exception of Byng, perhaps the worst-used officer in the annals of the navy.\*

\* The following is a list of the two fleets:—

BRITISH.			SPANISH.		
100	{	Victory ...	{	130	Santissima Trinidad.
		Captain R. Calder.			Concepcion.
		Captain G. Gray.			Conde de Regia.
	{	Britannia. ...		112	Mexicano.
		Vice-Admiral Thompson.			Principe d'Asturias.
		Captain Foley.			Salvador del Mundo.
98	{	Barfleur ...			San Josef.
		Vice-Adm. Hon. Waldegrave			Neptuno.
		Captain Daeres		80	San Nicholas.
	{	Prince George ...			Atalante.
		Rear-Admiral W. Parker.			Bahama.
		Captain Irwin.			Conquistador.
90	{	Blenheim ...			Firme.
		Captain Frederick.			Glorioso.
		Namur ...			Oriente.
	{	Captain ...			Pelayo.
		Commodore Nelson.			San Antonio.
		Captain B. Miller.			San Domingo.
74	{	Goliath ...			San Firmin.
		Captain Sir C. Knowles, Bt.			San Francisco de Paula.
		Captain Collingwood.			San Gennaro.
	{	Orion ...			San Ildefonso.
		Captain Sir J. Saumarez.			San Juan Nepomuceno.
		Captain G. Murray.			San Pablo.
64	{	Egmont ...			San Isidro.
		Captain Sutton.			Soberano.
		Culloden ...			Terrible.
	{	Irresistible ...			
		Captain Martin.			
		Diadem ...			
		Captain Towry.			

We are not acquainted with the names of more than two or three of the Spanish Captains.

It was a foggy, hazy morning, and neither the number nor the size of our ships could be very distinctly seen by the Spaniards, till we had got within a mile of them ; then as midday approached and the fog cleared off, they perceived Jervis bearing down upon them in compact order and in two lines ; his object being to complete the separation of the squadron which had fallen to leeward, and thus to render himself more nearly equal to the remaining divisions which he destined to receive his attack. In this object he completely succeeded. The Culloden led the way, and, with the Blenheim next to her, a little before noon, passed through the space between the main body and the squadron already mentioned : the whole fleet followed these ships, opening a tremendous fire on the Spaniards as they came up with them, and receiving their broadsides in return. The Spaniards fought bravely, and their second in command, Vice-Admiral Moreno, even attempted to retaliate Jervis's manœuvre on himself, steering to cut through the British line ahead of the Victory, which was nearly in the centre of it. To defeat this manœuvre, Sir John signalled to his own fleet to tack in succession ; and, changing his tactics, the Spanish Admiral began to bear up before the wind, a movement which might enable him either to unite the main body of his fleet to the division which was separated from it, or to effect his own escape. Fortunately Nelson was in the rear, and had thus a clearer sight of the evolutions of the enemy than his commander-in-chief. To counteract the Spaniards' last manœuvre, and to defeat their object, whichever it might be, he disregarded the signal to tack, and ordered his ship to be wore.\* Up to this time the Captain had scarcely fired a gun, but this movement, while it gave a new direction to the British fleet,

\* To "tack" is to get the wind on the other side of the ship by turning her head *towards* the wind. To "wear" is to get the wind on the other side by turning her head *away from* the wind.

gave her also the lead in it, and brought her at once into action with the whole van of the enemy. In a few minutes she was attacked by no fewer than four first-rates and two third-rates. Troubridge, who was fortunately at hand, bore down eagerly to Nelson's assistance; and presently the Blenheim also came up to take a share in this part of the battle. Two of the Spanish ships, the *Salvador del Mundo*, 112, and the *San Isidro*, 74, now dropped astern to escape from the tremendous fire of the three British seventy-fours; but their retreat scarcely improved their condition, for they only fell in with the *Excellent*, which was also hastening up to support the Captain; and Collingwood poured so tremendous a fire into them both, that the *San Isidro* struck. He left the *Salvador del Mundo* to his comrades in his wake, and again pressed on to join Nelson, who by this time greatly needed help, for the Captain was now little better than a wreck. To use the words of Nelson himself, "she had lost her foretopmast, she had not a sail, shroud, or rope left, her wheel was shot away, and she was incapable of further service in the line or in chase." Her chief antagonist at this moment was the *San Nicolas*, 80, into which the *Excellent*, as she came up, poured a tremendous fire, and then passed on to the *Santissima Trinidad*, with which the Captain had been engaged from the time of her first coming into action. But besides the damage which the Captain had inflicted on the other ships, she had reduced two, the *San Nicolas* and *San Josef*, 112, to a state still more disabled than her own; they had fallen aboard one another, and, after the *Excellent* had passed on, Nelson dropped back abreast of the one nearest to him, the *San Nicolas*; and, being no longer able to take any other part in the action, he determined to secure her by boarding. There was in the Captain at this time a portion of the sixty-ninth regiment serving as marines. They swarmed up eagerly on deck for this service, but the first man on



board the enemy was Captain Berry, till lately Nelson's first-lieutenant, but who, having recently been promoted, was therefore merely a volunteer on this occasion. Among the first to follow him was Nelson himself. The Spanish officers fired their pistols at him, but he pushed on, and, when he reached the quarterdeck, found his men hauling down her colours, and the ship was his own. But now that she was so, she was exposed to a fresh enemy, the *San Josef*, whose crew began to pour a well-directed fire of musketry on her decks. Without an instant's delay Nelson ordered Miller, his captain, who had most unwillingly stayed behind in his ship, to send more men into the prize, while he led those around him into the *San Josef*. He was the first man on board her, and as his foot touched her deck, the Spanish captain surrendered, presenting his sword to him, and telling him that Admiral Winthuysen was below mortally wounded.

While these events were going on around the Captain, the other British ships were doing their part also. The capture of the *Salvador del Mundo* was completed by the *Orion*; and the *Santissima Trinidad*, already almost disabled by the Captain, and now surrounded by the *Orion*, the *Excellent*, and the *Irresistible*, also struck, though she afterwards got away, as did the *Soberano*, 74. But by this time the evening was closing in; and, as the number of the sound ships of the enemy still greatly exceeded that of ours which were fit for any further service, Jervis made the signal to discontinue the action, and to bring to for the purpose of securing the four prizes. Admiral de Cordova was still desirous to continue the action, and would probably have done so, had he been supported in his opinion by his captains; but many of them were killed, and of those who survived only two were favourable to such a step. Yet so reluctant was the brave Spaniard to give up all hope of retrieving his disaster, that the next day he again bore towards the British

fleet in order of battle, though his own ship, the *Santisima Trinidad*, was so disabled as to be towed by a frigate. No renewal of the action, however, ensued; and on the 16th Jervis with his prizes anchored in Lagos Bay. What he had seen on the 15th gave him a hope that it might still be possible to add the great four-decker to the number, and accordingly, as soon as he reached Lagos, he sent back three frigates to look for her. Four days afterwards they did fall in with her, though, apparently by some strange mismanagement, they contrived to let her escape them. But on the first day of the ensuing month a single frigate, the *Terpischore*, 32, Captain R. Bowen, met her, still tossing about, and trying almost hopelessly to regain some Spanish harbour. Bowen attacked her, keeping up as brisk a fire upon her as was consistent with the necessity of avoiding her tremendous broadside. He harassed her all that day, pursuing her towards Cape Spartel; and the next morning he was still sticking to her, when a whole squadron of Spanish line-of-battle ships hove in sight, and saved her. Bowen retreated to Tangier Bay, and the Spaniards to Algesiras; but it was above a month after the battle before the crippled giant reached Cadiz, there to be secure for a time, and only for a time, from her unwearied and irresistible enemies.

The joy felt at the victory was enhanced by the fact that it had been gained at a comparatively small sacrifice of life. The total number killed was but seventy-three, of which twenty-four, almost a third, had fallen on board the Captain. The return of wounded (which, however, by some mistake did not include some who had received but slight hurts) amounted to only two hundred and twenty-seven; and of these fifty-six, or one-fourth, belonged to the same ship, Nelson himself being among them, having received a severe contusion in the groin, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. The

Captain was also the only British ship that had lost a mast, and the list of her damages would alone suffice to show how completely she had borne the brunt of the battle in which she had been hotly engaged with every ship that struck, and had captured two herself. After her the most severe sufferers were the *Blenheim*, whose list of casualties showed twelve killed and forty-nine wounded, and the *Culloden*, who lost ten killed and forty-seven wounded. The *Excellent* had eleven killed and twelve wounded. Next to them in this sad pre-eminence came the *Irresistible* with nineteen killed and wounded, the *Prince George* with fifteen. The losses of the other ships, as will be seen from this enumeration, were very slight. It remains to relate that the Government at home showered honours on their victorious fleet with a judicious liberality. In his public despatch Jervis had mentioned no officer with any especial praise, because, to cite his own words, "he was confident that had those least in action been in the situation of the fortunate few, their behaviour would not have been less meritorious ;" but in a private letter which he wrote to the First Lord, he warmly acknowledged the great services of Nelson, did ample justice to the officer-like promptitude of Rear-Admiral Parker, to the energy and brilliant skill of Troubridge, and to the gallantry of the captains of the *Blenheim*, *Prince George*, *Orion*, *Irresistible*, and *Colossus* : Frederick, Irwin, Saumarez, Martin, and Murray. A week or two before the battle, a peerage had been offered to the Admiral, and the public notification of the honour had only been delayed for the completion of the preliminary arrangements necessary in such cases. He was therefore looked upon as already a Baron, and was raised to an Earldom, by the title derived from the headland nearest to the scene of his glory, *St. Vincent*. Vice-Admiral Thompson and Rear-Admiral Parker were made baronets. Nelson might have had a baronetcy, but

he preferred the Ribbon of the Bath, which was gladly and never more worthily bestowed. Calder, the captain of the fleet who took home the despatches, received a similar honour, and all the first-lieutenants were promoted.

Very different was the fate of the unfortunate Spanish officers. The valour which they had displayed could not save them from the displeasure of their masters, who were learning of the French Republic to consider ill-fortune as a crime to be expiated by the severest punishment of the commander. Accordingly Don Josef was not only degraded from his professional rank, but was forbidden ever again to appear at court or (by a somewhat whimsical addition to his punishment) in any town on the coast. Another admiral, Count Morales, was cashiered, as were most of the captains; while even of the junior officers many were degraded, suspended, or publicly reprimanded.

Decisive and important as this defeat of the enemy was, it was not in the Admiral's own judgment the greatest service which he rendered his country this year. It is painful to state that the act on which he thus valued himself more was the suppression of a mutinous spirit in those very seamen whom he had thus led to victory, and whom, under any other circumstances than those which now arose, that very fact would have attached to him for ever. It was not, indeed, in his fleet that this feeling first displayed itself; but it was the more inexcusable on that account, since the grievances which were made its pretext had been amply redressed before any act of insubordination was committed on this or any other foreign station. For the sailors did at this time labour under many grievances, which, though they were inflicted on them through neglect and carelessness rather than from any intentional injustice, were not the less intolerable on that account. Their pay had not been raised from the sum at which it had been fixed in the time of the Duke

of York, afterwards James II., though the price of all the necessaries of life had greatly risen. Their pensions, too, were left at the same amount, though those to which the soldiers became entitled had been augmented. What was even more irritating, as carrying with it a greater appearance of deliberate unfairness was the circumstance that for the provisions served out to them a lighter weight\* was established than that used in ordinary traffic; while even for that light weight they were wholly at the mercy of the pursers, who at that time were commonly taken from a very inferior class of men, and who cheated and robbed the sailors without scruple and without limit. Other minor causes of complaint related to the general severity of the naval discipline; the constant refusal of leave even to men in harbour; and a variety of trifling matters which, had they stood alone, would hardly have been thought of, but which no one could deny to be undeserved hardships, and which now served to swell the catalogue of evils which the men were resolved no longer to endure.

It had long been no secret to many of those officers who had from time to time kindly and judiciously interested themselves in the welfare of the seamen, that deep discontent existed throughout the navy generally. The fact was also known on shore, and the spread of revolutionary societies in England, members of which had frequently (by a singular mismanagement) been sent to serve on board the fleet as a punishment for offences against the law, had probably contributed in some degree to hasten the outbreak, which, however, must have occurred sooner or later. Even in the case of the mutiny at Spithead, the proceedings of the sailors exhibited an organisation, mingled with an amount of shrewdness and general information that could hardly have been expected

\* The ordinary pound then, as now, consisted of sixteen ounces, but a sailor's pound was fixed at fourteen.

from ordinary sailors ; while, in the case of the more criminal rebellion at the Nore, the interposition of other agents was established beyond the possibility of doubt.

The first step taken by the seamen was one of the most perfect propriety, and one which, had it been rightly met, might have prevented the greater part if not the whole of the subsequent evil and disgrace. At the end of February the crews of four of the line-of-battle ships at Spithead, the *Queen Charlotte*, the flagship, being among the number, addressed separate petitions to Lord Howe (who was still nominally commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet, though he had long since devolved the duties on the second in command, Lord Bridport), entreating, in very general terms, his interposition with the Admiralty to obtain for them a relief from their grievances, so that they might at least be put on the same footing with the army and the militia, in respect both of their pay and of the provision which they might be enabled to make for their wives and families. Lord Howe, who was in a very bad state of health, communicated the subject of these petitions to Lord Bridport and to Sir Peter Parker, the port admiral : and these officers cannot be acquitted of want of knowledge of their men, in wholly misapprehending, or of want of care for their profession and their country, in neglecting the most momentous crisis that has threatened the welfare of both since the Revolution. They returned Lord Howe a flip-pant reply, that the petitions were the work of some ill-disposed person, and appear to have taken no trouble whatever to inquire closely into the matter. Had they done so, they could hardly have failed to learn facts which would have prompted a very different answer. For there can be no question that the letters and petitions addressed to Lord Howe had been sent in pure loyalty and good faith, and that the sailors at Spithead at all events had no desire but to obtain a peaceful relief from grievances which, as they honestly believed, required only to

be made known to their superiors, to be redressed by them. They had no feeling but that, while resolved to do their duty to their king and to their country, it was reasonable at the same time to perform it to themselves and their families. Lord Howe acted on the report of these two admirals, that is to say, he did not act at all; and the sailors, finding their humility and dutiful supplication disregarded, took the matter into their own hands, and resolved to extort a reply, a satisfactory reply, and now to compel their rulers to grant them that relief which before they had solicited in submissive tones, and would have been contented to receive as a gracious favour.

In the course of the next six weeks they organised their plans with great ability and moderation, and with the most perfect secrecy; nor was it till everything was arranged that Sir Peter Parker learnt that something was in agitation not wholly consistent with the reply which he had given to Lord Howe's inquiries. He communicated his information or his suspicions to the Admiralty, and they, thinking active service the best cure for what they looked on as a little momentary agitation, ordered the Channel fleet to put to sea. On the morning of the 15th of April the order arrived at Portsmouth, and, in obedience to it, Lord Bridport instantly made the signal to prepare to weigh anchor. It was the signal for the breaking out of the mutiny. Not a hand was laid on a capstan, but with one accord the crew of every ship in the harbour manned the rigging, and gave three cheers. The mutiny was begun. The men now proceeded to take the command of the ships from their officers, and to appoint delegates, two from each ship, to conduct the entire negotiation with the authorities at the Admiralty; for, to the last, the seamen at Spithead had no idea of obtaining their object by any other means than remonstrance, remonstrance to be enforced, indeed, by entire abstinence from action till it succeeded, but by no stronger measures. The crew of one of the ships, at the time



when the discussion was warmest, did indeed suggest the taking her to a French port; and the delegates of the rest at once made known their determination rather to sink her than to permit such treason to their country: nay, even when, as will be mentioned hereafter, a lieutenant of the London, exasperated by the audacious bearing of one of the sailors, drew his pistol and slew him on the spot, they restrained themselves, and accepted as his vindication the assertion of Admiral Colpoys that the officer had acted under his orders, though the Admiral was himself, perhaps, in their eyes, the most obnoxious man in the whole fleet. It was plain that the men were sincere in the statement which closed their petition to the Admiralty, that they desired "to convince the nation at large that they knew when to cease to ask as well as when to begin, and that they asked nothing but what was moderate and might be granted without detriment to the nation or injury to the service."

So completely, indeed, did the Lords of the Admiralty, after a very brief investigation, adopt this view of the men's conduct, and admit that their demands were founded in justice and moderation, that they agreed in recommending the Government to grant all that had been asked of them. Their advice was taken; and when the men further required that a full and free pardon should be given by the King under his sign manual to the fleet in general, and especially to those who had apparently been the leaders in extorting these concessions, that also was agreed to. A royal proclamation to the desired effect was sent down to Portsmouth, and read on board the different ships, and thus, within a week after the mutiny had broken out, it was apparently appeased to the perfect satisfaction of all parties.

It was renewed once more for a few days. The promised increase in the pay and pensions of the sailors of necessity required the sanction of a parliamentary vote,

by which alone the requisite funds could be raised and appropriated; but there was rather more delay than the sailors had expected in passing these votes, and the technical language used on the subject by some of the ministers combined with this delay to raise a suspicion in the men's minds that the fair promises which had been made to them had been only intended to cajole them into submission, and that some loophole was to be found to evade their fulfilment. So on the 7th of May they again hoisted the red flag, which had been the original signal of their mutiny. For a moment the second outbreak threatened to become worse than the first. Admiral Colpoys, one of the officers in command at Portsmouth, wholly lost his temper, and one of the lieutenants shot a man in the London, on which the sailors rose in a body, and disarmed all the officers. At last Lord Howe was sent down with full powers from the Cabinet to ratify all the concessions which had been made, in such a manner as should satisfy the seamen that there was no intention of recalling or evading them. They had full confidence in him, many of them having sailed under him, and won the battle of the 1st of June under his orders; and he fully justified on this occasion the trust which both parties were willing to repose in him. With a dignified sense of what was due to authority, which, it was undeniable, had been outraged by the proceedings of the men, he insisted on their expressing contrition for their conduct as a step absolutely indispensable to the grant of the royal pardon; and then, having satisfied discipline by the exaction of this token of submission, he gave them every assurance that they could require that the removal of their grievances should be confirmed by an act of parliament, their entire pardon by a deed under the Great Seal. The men willingly, it may even be said gladly, returned to their duty: the fleet at Plymouth, which had followed the example of that at Portsmouth in mutiny, followed it also in

submission ; and thus, in less than a month from the first outbreak, as far as these two great fleets were concerned, every symptom of discontent had entirely passed away.

Perhaps the most painful part of the whole affair (as implying a high degree of criminality, oppression, and tyranny in many of the superior officers) is the fact that among the requirements of the men which Lord Howe conceded was the removal of those officers who were obnoxious to them, and that, when they gave in the list, the number who were thus branded, in so small a fleet as one of sixteen ships, amounted to upwards of a hundred ; while Lord Howe himself, on an investigation of the circumstances, was inclined to think mere removal an insufficient punishment for some of those who were complained of. We shall have occasion hereafter to see that there were others in the service still worse, whose cruelty drove their men to actual madness ; and, on the contrary, that there were some of whose affectionate humanity their men took a singular method of showing their approval. Lord Howe's opinion of the transaction as a whole was, that while the men with whom he had been brought into contact had shown the most generous minds he ever met with among those of the same class, they displayed also an exceeding proneness to suspicion, which yet did not prevent them from placing an unhesitating confidence in designing incendiaries, who sought to excite their worst passions for their own political purposes.

It is not probable that such persons had had much, or perhaps any share whatever, in the transactions at Spithead ; but it is certain that the mutiny at the Nore was mainly, if not wholly, attributable to them. The very same week in which the men at Portsmouth had acknowledged their grievances to be entirely removed, the fleet at the Nore mutinied in a manner which showed a disposition in the leaders very different from that which had actuated the delegates at Spithead. In fact, the latter

were genuine British sailors, never, even in the height of their revolt, losing their reverence for discipline and good order, nor their respect for their superior officers ; Parker the leader of the outbreak at the Nore was a thoroughly bad man, wholly undeserving of the title of sailor, of which he had more than once been formally deprived. He was the son of an Exeter tradesman ; and, eleven years before, he had entered the navy, obtaining a midshipman's berth on board the *Culloden*. Having been discharged from her for gross misconduct, he was fortunate enough to obtain similar rank in the *Leander* ; but his continued misbehaviour soon caused him to be turned out of her also. He passed through one or two more ships, till, at the beginning of the war, he was a mate in the *Resistance* frigate, in which he behaved worse than ever, was brought to a court-martial, broke, and declared incapable of again serving as an officer ; and, as a further punishment, he was sent as a common sailor to the *Hebe*. From her he was invalided : and he appears to have removed to Scotland, as, in the March of this year, 1797, he was sent from Perth as a quota man\* to join the *Sandwich*, the flagship of Admiral Buckner, the commander-in-chief at the Nore. His superior education naturally gave him influence among his messmates, which was increased when he was found to be amply provided with money. And this act alone shows he was an instrument in the hands of others ; for he himself had but just been discharged from the gaol at Edinburgh, where he had been confined for debt. He had scarcely joined the fleet when he commenced his machinations, and he was assisted by one particular cause of discontent which existed in this fleet, and most of all in the flagship. It had been a practice to keep a number of able seamen on board the *Sandwich*, far beyond what was

\* At this time the different districts of the country were required to furnish a certain number or quota of men to the navy according to their population (in the same manner as men were provided for the militia), and the men who entered in this way were known as *quota men*.

wanted for her service, who were borne on her books as disposable supernumeraries. As, they were mostly men of known good character, the captains of other ships, actively employed, frequently applied for some of them to fill the posts of petty officers : but the Admiral, though he did not want them, would not part with them ; and they naturally felt it a great hardship to be thus kept doing nothing, debarred from promotion, and from all prospect of prize-money, distinction, and further advancement. Cunningly availing himself of this discontent, and assisted, as there seems no doubt, by agents from some of the revolutionary societies at that time existing in London, Parker easily succeeded in stirring up the crews of the ships at the Nore to a mutiny, of which they appointed him the leader. In some respects he followed the example that had been set at Portsmouth, causing the men of each ship to appoint delegates, and drawing up a petition, some articles of which were, as he well knew, superfluous, in that they demanded the same concessions that had been granted to the Portsmouth ships, and which, as was perfectly notorious, had been granted not to a few particular crews, but to the service in general : while others were utterly ridiculous and inconsistent with the very existence of a fleet, since they required an absolute sanction of desertion. In other respects also he departed widely from the moderation of his comrades in the west ; even beginning the mutiny by an act of extreme violence, and causing the *Inflexible*, on the 13th of May, to fire on the *St. Fiorenzo*, on board of which a court-martial was sitting at the time. At a later period he committed intolerable outrages on some of those who, without apparently any fault of their own, had become obnoxious to him ; ducking some of the officers till they were nearly drowned, and flogging others.

At the end of the month the outbreak became more serious, when eleven ships of the line belonging to the North-sea fleet, with which Admiral Duncan was about to

sail from Yarmouth to blockade the Texel, deserted their admiral, turned back to the mouth of the Thames, and joined Parker. Duncan himself, with his own ship, the *Venerable*, 74; the *Adamant*, 50, Captain Hotham; and the *Active* cutter, Captain Hamilton, proceeded to his destination. By a device something resembling that of Admiral Cornwallis in 1795, he kept the *Adamant* to make signals in the offing, and so concealed his weakness from the enemy. But the junction of these new ships raised Parker's spirits to an extravagant degree of elation: at one time he talked of putting to sea with the whole fleet, as if he were admiral; at another, of stopping the whole navigation of the Thames, seizing vessels that endeavoured to get to sea, and threatened to force his way into the harbour at Sheerness, and even up the Thames towards London. The alarm in the metropolis was excessive: the buoys in the river were taken up, the forts on each bank were heavily armed and furnished with large garrisons, every preparation was made for the entire destruction of the fleet, should it attempt to advance; while the panic of the nation at large was manifested by the state of the funds, which fell to a price at which no man alive had seen them. But the Government acted with admirable firmness. At first, as they had done at Portsmouth, they sent down some of the Lords of the Admiralty to confer with the delegates; but Parker treated them with such insolence that they returned to town. On this the Prime Minister himself brought in bills, not only authorising the infliction of the utmost penalties of the law upon all engaged in the mutiny, but rendering all who should encourage the mutineers, and even all who should hold any kind of intercourse with them, liable to the same punishment; and such was the general feeling of Parliament and of the nation that, though one or two members of the Opposition raised a feeble voice against these measures, all the ordinary rules of parliament were suspended, and they were passed in two days.

This judicious and timely severity brought the mutineers to reflection. By the end of the first week in June the spirit that Parker had kindled began to die away : the novelty of the situation, which for a while was not without its charms to the seamen, had worn out. The fleets at Portsmouth and Plymouth disowned all fellowship with them ; and the example of one or two ships, such as the *Clyde*, which, from the first, had resisted the contagion, began to tell. Parker himself saw that his influence was waning, and began to perceive the extreme peril of his own situation. He tried to open a fresh communication with the Admiralty ; but his language was still too arrogant to be listened to, and the continued firmness of the authorities increased the desire of the other ringleaders to make their peace. It was in vain that he resumed his high tone, and hung Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas in effigy at the yard-arm of his ship ; on the 10th of June two of the ships, the *Leopard* and the *Repulse*, hauled down the red flag, deserted the main body of the mutinous fleet, and retreated into the Thames ; being fired at by the *Sandwich* as they went. Their example was followed by ship after ship. In some the crew being divided into two parties, one wishing to abandon and the other to adhere to the mutiny, the discussion gave rise to fierce contests, and even to loss of life ; but, in most instances, the crews were unanimous in returning to their duty. At last, on the evening of the 14th, the crew of the *Sandwich* herself brought that vessel under the guns of the fort at Sheerness, and gave up Parker as a prisoner to the authorities. He was at once brought to trial, convicted, and on the 29th was hung on board the *Sandwich*. One or two other executions took place ; but very few, considering the heinousness of the crime which had been committed, and the danger in which it placed the whole kingdom. Minor punishments were inflicted in several instances, and sentence of death was passed upon many who were still kept in prison, in the hope of

finding some favourable opportunity of pardoning them. In the autumn Duncan's victory furnished such an occasion, which was gladly taken advantage of : an amnesty was published ; the men were released, and returned to their duty, eager to shew, by their increased zeal and valour, the sincerity of their repentance.\*

The mutinous spirit, however, was not confined to the home stations. Even the Venerable had not wholly escaped it ; for a small body of mutineers had attempted to seize that vessel, and might probably have won over the rest of the crew to join them had not their attempt been crushed in the bud by the intrepid promptitude of Duncan himself. But in the Mediterranean fleet, still lying off the coast of Portugal, the evil-disposed for a time had better success. Lord St. Vincent, however, who had just beaten double his number of foreign enemies, was not to be daunted by a few traitors in his own fleet. Some of the ringleaders on board the St. George were seized and brought to instant trial ; he himself giving them notice that, if they were convicted while it was still daylight, they should be hung the instant after their sentence was passed. They obtained a few hours' respite by the fact of the trial lasting till evening, and they hoped for more, since the next day was Sunday. But the Admiral saw that the very singularity of an execution on such a day would infinitely increase the impression it was calculated to make ; and at eight o'clock, on Sunday the 9th of July, the men were hanged by their own messmates : Lord St. Vincent, still further to increase the force of the example made, departing from the usual practice of drawing men from different ships to assist in the execution, and ordering that

\* For many of the circumstances connected with the mutiny at the Nore, I have been indebted to an elaborate account of it, in MS., drawn up by Commodore Cunningham, the same officer who at the time of the mutiny was captain of the Clyde, the only ship on that station which did not join in it. It was drawn up for the perusal of King William IV. when Lord High Admiral, and has been lent to me for the purpose of this work by my kind friend Sir Michael Seymour.



none but the crew of the *St. George* itself, as the sole participators in the mutiny, should touch a rope. Still the evil spirit was not fully extinguished : once or twice it broke out again ; but was crushed at once with merciless severity as it deserved, (since the men had now no pretext for alleging a single grievance) ; though so formidable on one occasion did the spirit of the men still appear to be, that Lord *St. Vincent* apprehended that an attempt would be made to rescue some mutineers who were sentenced to be hung on board the *Defence* ; and he actually had the launches of the different ships fitted with carronades, and gave secret orders to the commanders, in case of any such attempt being made, to fire into the *Defence* till she submitted.

Even the Cape of Good Hope was not free from the contagion. There also, in the course of the autumn, a band of mutineers seized the flagship, the *Tremendous*, appointed delegates, and appeared inclined to copy the worst part of the example that had been set them in Europe. It is said that Admiral *Pringle*, the naval commander, wavered in his resolution ; but fortunately he took counsel of the Governor, Lord *Macartney*, who roused him to meet the danger with firmness, and strengthened his resolution by the most zealous co-operation. When the red flag was first hoisted, the fleet was lying close under the guns of the Great Amsterdam Battery. By Lord *Macartney*'s command, the battery was manned at once by the soldiers, shot were heated redhot, and notice was sent to the mutineers that, if within two hours the red flag was not struck, and a white flag hoisted in token of submission, the battery should open its fire, and destroy every ship that held out. None dared to provoke the execution of so terrible a menace ; the Governor would listen to no parley, but laid his watch on the parapet of the battery resolved to give the fatal word of command the instant that the appointed hour

arrived. A quarter of an hour before that time came the red flag was lowered, and the white flag hoisted in its place. The worst of the ringleaders were executed; a few others were sentenced to minor punishments; and then a lenity, as judicious as the previous severity, forbore to push further inquiries into the guilt of those who had been misled rather than misleaders.

Since that day no British fleet has followed the example of that at Spithead, much less has one imitated the criminals at the Nore. In fact the very success of the seamen of the Channel fleet has deprived them of all pretext for so doing. That these last were justified in their conduct is amply proved, not only by the instant compliance which their demands received, but by the invariable indulgence, one might almost say commendation, with which their conduct has been mentioned by every historian who has recorded it. It affords an example to which, since the common people of Rome seceded to the Sacred Mount, history affords no parallel, of a lowborn and comparatively uneducated assembly, when goaded by injustice and oppression, limiting their demands to the requirements of the strictest equity, and, in the prosecution of them, uniting an undeviating moderation and temper with the most unyielding firmness in adhering to the claims that they once put forward. A still more convincing proof of the justice and wisdom of the men of the Channel fleet is afforded by the influence which their resistance has had on the authorities that have ruled the navy since their day. They have had the wisdom to recognise the force of the lesson which was then taught to them; and since that time have gradually improved the condition of the British sailor, till he, who was once the most neglected, is now perhaps the best cared for of all the public servants of the country. The greatest steps of all towards ameliorating his condition, and raising him in his social position, as mentioned on a former occasion, have been taken within the last few years. That, at

first, they should hardly have been appreciated by the men themselves was not unnatural: but their value is gradually becoming fully understood. It is seen that, while the establishment of Sailors' Homes, of the Naval Reserve, of a system of permanent enlistment, and other measures conceived in a similar spirit, have a twofold operation, a full proportion of the practical benefit arising from them accrues to the sailors. If they tend on the one hand to keep constantly available for the service of the country a band of trained seamen, they at the same time remove the seamen themselves from temptation, and protect them from injustice; while the substitution of continued and certain for brief and precarious employment, sets a seal, with the sanction of the law, on the estimation which they have long enjoyed in the hearts of their countrymen, who have always regarded their service with peculiar pride, and themselves with a most especial affection and admiration, as those whose prowess and glory is most inseparably connected with their own glory and their own security.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1797.

Lord St. Vincent retires to the Tagus — Nelson is left to watch Cadiz — Goes up the Mediterranean to escort the troops from Elba — Returns to Cadiz — Courtesies between Nelson and Admiral Massaredo — Feelings of Nelson's crew towards him — He bombards Cadiz — His action with a Spanish gunboat — Lord St. Vincent plans an attack on Teneriffe — Nelson presses for the aid of soldiers — He is sent against it with a small squadron — Failure of the attack — Nelson is dangerously wounded — Presence of mind shown by Troubridge — Humanity of the Spanish governor — Incorrectness of the information which led to the enterprise — Inactivity of the French fleet — The San Fiorenzo and Nymphe capture La Resistance and La Constance — Exploits of our squadron in the West Indies — Of the Hazard — Mutiny of the Hermione — Her recapture by Sir E. Hamilton — Admiral Duncan watches the Dutch fleet in the Texel — Defeats it at Camperdown.

AFTER the battle of St. Vincent the Admiral retired into Lagos Bay to refit those of his ships which a rapid repair might again make fit for sea : and then, finding that the Spanish fleet was secure in Cadiz harbour, and occupied in a similar task, he returned to his old station at the mouth of the Tagus, leaving Nelson (whose commission as a Rear-Admiral reached him in the course of March) with a squadron off the Spanish coast, partly to watch the Spaniards, and partly to intercept a flotilla which was reported to be on its way from Mexico with an enormous amount of treasure. Subsequent intelligence arrived that the Mexican ships had put into Teneriffe, and Nelson, drawing nearer to the shore, established a rigid blockade of Cadiz. But neither he, nor the Commander-in-chief, were very easy as to their means of performing the task imposed on them. A small reinforcement had indeed arrived in the Tagus a month after the battle, but it did not raise the British fleet to above twenty-one sail of the line, one or two of which

were in very bad condition ; while, besides the ships now completely refitted in Cadiz, amounting to twenty-six of the line of battle, there was another fleet in Ferrol, also preparing for sea, and believed to be designed to join the French in Brest. The Toulon fleet, too, had nothing to oppose it in the Mediterranean, and might be expected to swoop down on the transports with the troops from Elba, which had at last evacuated that island, and were on their way to Gibraltar under the escort of a single frigate. This danger struck Nelson so forcibly that he proposed to Lord St. Vincent to allow him to enter the Mediterranean to protect the troops whose capture would have given the French a triumph which he could not bear to anticipate. His offer was accepted ; for a few days he left the command before Cadiz to Sir James Saumarez, as the senior captain, and steered his course towards Elba, expecting to meet the convoy on its way. It was well that he did so, for on arriving off Minorca, he learnt that a French squadron, somewhat larger than his own, was cruising around the island, which would in all probability have met the transports and captured them, even if it was not actually on the watch for them. It did not, however, fall in with, probably it did not wish to fall in with, Nelson : and, though he saw a vessel which apparently belonged to it, observing his motions, he would not permit his desire to attack the enemy wherever he could find them to interfere on this occasion with the object of securing the safety of the soldiers. He soon met them, conducted them in safety to Gibraltar, and then hastened to rejoin Lord St. Vincent, in the belief that the Spanish fleet had received orders to put to sea from Cadiz at all hazards, and therefore that another battle was impending.

The Dons, however, as he called them, did not come out. Their new chief was Admiral Massaredo, a brave man, and full of a courtesy more in accordance with the

spirit of the old school of Spanish officers than with that of the French republicans. Nelson indeed set him the example, sending him notice, while continuing the blockade of his fleet, that on the 4th of June a royal salute would be fired in honour of the birthday of King George III. "that the ladies of Cadiz might not be alarmed at the firing;" and Massaredo, in acknowledging the civility that had dictated the message, assured him that "the general wish of the Spanish nation could not but interest itself in so august a motive" as that of paying all due respect to royalty in the person of a monarch so much venerated and beloved. This reciprocity of mannerly attentions did not, however, prevent either admiral from doing his best to ruin the force under the other's command. As Massaredo would not bring his fleet into the open sea to fight, Nelson bombarded the harbour with the hope of destroying it as it lay at anchor; while the Spaniards, on the other hand, made unusual efforts to take him prisoner or kill him on one occasion when his exuberant gallantry prompted him to lead his boats in person to the attack.

He was gradually breathing his own spirit into every captain who served under him: and the fruits of his example were constantly showing themselves in the increasing audacity and success of our officers. While the mildness and humanity (to which, however, discipline was never in any degree sacrificed) which were equally among his pre-eminent qualifications for command, made a not less salutary impression on the seamen in general. The Captain had been found, from the injuries she had received on Valentine's Day, so wholly unsuited to the performance of the tasks imposed upon Nelson, that he shifted his flag to the Irresistible; and from her Lord St. Vincent presently transferred him to the Theseus, some of whose crew had not escaped the suspicion of being infected with the spirit of mutinous discontent whose outbreaks have been recorded in the last chapter. The mere

appointment of Nelson to command them, with Captain Miller, whom he took with him from the Captain, and whom he always reckoned one of the best officers he had ever known, sufficed to eradicate every symptom of disorder or disaffection. They had not been long in her when one night a paper was dropped on the quarter deck, couched in the following terms, "Success attend Admiral Nelson! God bless Captain Miller! we thank them for the officers they have placed over us: we are happy, and comfortable; and will shed every drop of blood in our veins to support them; and the name of the Theseus shall be immortalised as high as the Captain's." The signature to this enthusiastic document was merely "SHIP'S COMPANY;" but the spirit it evinced made up for any irregularity in form. If we reflect on the number of officers whom Lord Howe at Portsmouth consented to withdraw from their ships it will seem hardly unreasonable to believe that had all admirals and captains been like Nelson and Miller, the mutiny there would never have taken place. Whether, if it had not occurred, any amount of peaceful and orderly remonstrance would have procured the redress of the grievances complained of, is another question. And those who doubt it will perhaps think that justice to the sailor was worth purchasing even at the cost of such a mutiny, if it could not be attained by milder means.

All through June Lord St. Vincent, at a little distance to the north-west, and Nelson with the in-shore squadron close to the port, were watching the fleet in Cadiz, anxiously hoping to see it come out and try the fortune of another battle. In the middle of the month Nelson reported thirteen sail-of-the-line apparently on the point of putting to sea: and, thinking his own squadron, though scarcely more than half their number, quite a match for them, he begged Lord St. Vincent not to send him a single ship more, lest the idea of his being fully prepared for them should lead the Spaniards to alter their intention.

But though from time to time they tantalised him with a show of coming out, though they carried on their repairs with such vigour that by the end of the month the number of their ships fit for service was doubled, and though the citizens of Cadiz petitioned the Government to order them to sail, in the hope that such a movement would at least draw off the blockading enemy, and so leave the port open for the galleons from Lima and a great convoy of merchantmen from the Havannah, whose arrival was daily expected; still the lesson which they had received in February had been too severe to allow them to be willing again to face the admiral and the fleet which had inflicted it: so on the 3rd of July, Lord St. Vincent yielded to the entreaties of Nelson to allow him to bombard them where they lay; giving him a bomb, the Thunderer, a gunboat, and all the barges and launches of the fleet armed with carronades and fully manned. Besides the annoyance and injury which this operation was calculated to inflict on the enemy, the two admirals had a second object in view of almost equal importance, that of occupying the minds of the men, lest their forced inactivity should give them leisure to nurse the discontent which was known still to exist in some of the ships, and to form plans of mutiny such as in fact were attempted to be executed a day or two after the bombardment was discontinued. Nelson led the attack in person; for some time the Thunderer threw her shells with extraordinary precision, till her large mortar was discovered to be injured, on which Nelson ordered her to be towed off, and the affair became a hand-to-hand conflict, in which he himself considered his personal courage to have been displayed more conspicuously than on any other occasion in his life. He was in his barge, with only his ten oarsmen, his coxswain, John Sykes, "an old Agamemnon," and Captain Fremantle, when he fell in with an entire fleet of Spanish boats of every description, which were sallying out in the hope of capturing the Thunderer in



her retreat. One of the largest of these boats, that which had on board the commander of the whole force, Don Miguel Tyrasin, accidentally came across Nelson's barge : the Spanish crew, twenty-six in number, doubled the British : they forced their way alongside, and tried to carry her by boarding. A desperate fight ensued, man to man, and cutlass to cutlass. Happily Nelson had still his right arm to wield the sword : but he was nearly overpowered. Twice, according to his own statement, did Sykes save his life ; once by actually interposing his head to receive a sabre-cut, that must else have fallen on his beloved admiral. For such heroism even Spanish courage was no match ; but it was not till eighteen out of his twenty-six men were slain, and every one of the survivors wounded, that the Spanish Commodore yielded. Besides his launch, two or three others of the best-armed boats, were captured, with above a hundred prisoners, and the rest were driven back close under the walls of Cadiz, while the whole of our loss did not exceed one man killed and twenty wounded.

The success of this first attack excited Lord St. Vincent to order a second, which took place the next night but one. The point of attack was somewhat varied, and the means of attack were strengthened, the boats being marshalled in three divisions, each under the command of a captain, and the Thunderer, whose mortar had been completely repaired, being now supported by two more bomb-vessels, the Terror and the Stromboli. So terrific was their fire, that the line-of-battle ships, which were in the outer harbour, the next morning worked in close to the shore to avoid being exposed to a repetition of such a cannonade. The Spaniards again sent out their boats to engage ours, and again many fierce conflicts took place : but we had no means of ascertaining the extent of the damage which we had inflicted ; and the design of a third bombardment, which Nelson had projected, was abandoned in consequence of a change in the wind, which

rendered it impracticable for the bomb-vessels to approach sufficiently near to have any effect.

But the enterprise on which at this moment the greatest reliance was placed for crippling the existing resources of Spain, was the reduction of the island of Teneriffe, where it was believed that the galleons and other richly-laden merchantmen had taken shelter. It is not clear to which officer the idea first occurred; but it was probably to Lord St. Vincent, who had received some intelligence respecting the strength of the fortifications and of the garrison, which was afterwards found to be very erroneous. Nelson, to whom the attempt was to be entrusted, entered most warmly into the plan, and applied himself with characteristic energy to acquire information respecting the island, the approaches to it, and the means of resistance which it possessed. His researches convinced him that there were great difficulties in the way of the projected enterprise, unless the ships were to be aided by a land-force; that, even if we mastered the ships in the harbour, unless the wind were wholly favourable, we might not be able to carry them off; while the prodigious height of the rocks, joined to the hollows and ravines with which the island abounds, tended in an unusual degree to produce rapid and unexpected changes, and sudden alterations of squalls and calms. But he remembered Blake's successful enterprise on the same scene,\* and was willing to hope that "fortune, which had favoured his gallant attempt, might help us again." Still, never liking to trust to chance anything which foresight might render certain, he suggested an application to General de Burgh, or to General O'Hara at Gibraltar, for their co-operation with the soldiers and artillery which had been brought from Elba. He was ready to pledge himself for the safe landing of the troops, and pronounced that, with such aid, "the business could not miscarry."

\* See vol. i. p. 84.

General O'Hara, however, entertained such doubts of the practicability of the scheme, that he could not be induced to join in it ; so Lord St. Vincent decided on making the attempt with the ships alone. He was perhaps a little encouraged in his resolution by a most gallant exploit performed by the boats of the two frigates *Lively* and *Minerve*, which, at the end of May, under the command of Lieutenant Hardy (afterwards Captain of the *Victory* at Trafalgar) had cut the *Mutine*, a fine 14-gun brig-corvette, out of the harbour of Santa Cruz, without receiving any very important damage, either from the batteries or the musketry of the garrison. The force placed under Nelson's orders consisted of three line-of-battle ships ; his own *Theseus*, the *Culloden*, Captain Troubridge, and the *Zealous*, Captain S. Hood ; the 50-gun ship *Leander*, Captain Thomson ; three frigates, the *Sea-horse*, 38, Captain Fremantle, the *Emerald*, 36, Captain Waller, and the *Terpsichore*, 32, Captain Bowen ; a small cutter named the *Fox*, and a mortar-boat. On the 15th of July it left the main body of the fleet, still before Cadiz ; and on the morning of the 20th it arrived in sight of Teneriffe. According to the practice which in later years he invariably adopted, during the voyage Nelson had repeatedly talked over with his captains every detail of his projected operations, in every contingency which he could picture to his mind ; and, consequently, when the squadron reached its destination, there was not a moment's delay except what arose from the wind, which became both foul and violent. He immediately drew up a summons to the governor of the island to surrender the galleon known as *El Principe d'Asturias*, with all her cargo ; all other cargoes and stores intended for exportation, and also the different forts ; promising the most absolute immunity from injury to the inhabitants of the island, and to the garrison a free conveyance to Spain ; and arranged that a thousand seamen and marines under the command

of Troubridge should land the next night between the principal fort and the town; should seize the fort, and then send in his summons, of the terms of which he expected the occupation of the fort to procure an acceptance. The wind, however, and a strong current prevented the boats from making any way at all, and when morning broke on the 22nd they were still above a mile from the shore, while their appearance had sufficed to put the Spaniards on their guard. The boats rejoined their ships, and Troubridge proposed that they should still return and land the men, who, instead of attempting to surprise the fort, an idea which was now manifestly impracticable, should endeavour to occupy the heights which commanded it; while the line-of-battle ships should stand in and batter the fort on the side towards the sea. The wind and currents baffled this scheme also. The men were landed, but the ships could not get within three miles of the fort; but Nelson considered the honour of his King and country "concerned in his persevering in the attempt to possess himself of the town, that the enemy might be convinced that there was nothing to which Englishmen are not equal." He re-embarked the men who had landed; and proposed to make a fresh attack, which he resolved to lead himself.

Though he had no suspicion of the real strength of the enemy, he nevertheless looked on this second attempt as a forlorn hope. The first attack had been a warning to the Spaniards to prepare for a second; and he could not doubt but that they had availed themselves of the respite afforded them. Still, if there was the slightest possibility of success, he thought that the honour of the nation required the attempt to be made.

Accordingly, on the evening of the 24th of July, the ships once more stood as close in-shore as they could. They anchored about two miles to the northward of the town to distract the attention of the garrison by inducing

a belief that the heights above the fort beforementioned were the first object of the intended attack ; but the real point for which the boats were directed to push, was the mole ; and each captain was instructed, as soon as the men under his command were landed, to march with them to the great square of the town. About eleven at night the boats, with something more than seven hundred men on board, quitted the ships ; Nelson himself, with Fremantle and Bowen in his barge, led the way ; and they had got within a short distance of the shore before the enemy discovered them. In a moment the alarm-bells were rung ; Nelson, with prompt judgment, directed the boats, which previously were fastened together, to ensure the simultaneousness of their landing, to cast off from each other and spread. They obeyed, and with a loud cheer all pulled vigorously in towards the shore. But, before they reached it, a terrible fire was opened upon them from the fort and batteries. As the Fox, with a hundred and eighty men, was moving forward in the rear of the boats, a shot struck her between wind and water ; and in a moment she went down, with the loss of more than half her crew. Undismayed by this sad disaster, the boats still pushed on : but the darkness and the strength of the current forced most of them wide of the mole ; and, as they landed on the rocky shore, the violence of the surf stove the greater part of them.

It would have been well if Nelson himself had missed the mole also ; his boat, however, and four or five more, with what appeared better fortune, kept straight on their intended course : but, as they touched the mole-head, and he, drawing his sword, was stepping on shore to lead his men, a grape-shot struck him on the right arm above the elbow ; and he fell back senseless into the boat. Grieved, but not daunted, his men pressed on in the face of greatly superior numbers : they stormed the battery on the mole-head, spiked the guns ; and, though Fremantle too was

wounded, and Bowen fell dead, shot through the heart, while of their immediate followers, more than half were speedily disabled, and all advance was found to be impossible, the remnant held their ground, and waited there till they could learn the fate of their comrades. They, under Troubridge, Hood, Miller, and Waller, had made good their landing to the southward of the citadel, thus fortunately avoiding the cannonade which mowed down Nelson and his party, and had forced their way, as they had been directed, into the great square, and had even commenced an attack on the citadel. That stronghold, however, was soon found to be beyond the utmost efforts of such a handful of men, with no available weapons but their bayonets and cutlasses, for their powder had all been soaked in their passage through the surf. The Spanish artillery, which had been skilfully posted, commanded every street by which they could advance; and Troubridge, hearing of Nelson's wound, and of the inability of his party to advance beyond the mole, and learning also that the Spanish garrison numbered eight thousand men, with admirable promptitude decided on providing for his safe retreat by a lordly tone of negotiation. Before full daylight should show the Governor the numerical weakness of his assailants, he sent Captain Hood with a flag of truce to that officer, proposing to be allowed to re-embark his men freely and without molestation, and even demanding, as his own boats were destroyed, that the Governor should furnish him with others for the conveyance of the sailors to their ships. If this were agreed to, he undertook that the British squadron should do no injury to the town or harbour; but, if these terms were refused, he declared that he would instantly burn the town, and attack the Spanish garrison at the point of the bayonet. The Governor did give a hint that Troubridge and his party ought to yield themselves prisoners of war; but, when

Hood in reply sternly repeated the proposal which he had brought, with the addition that, if it were rejected, the town should be set on fire in five minutes, he withdrew so unpalatable a suggestion, and agreed to the conditions proposed. He did more : from the moment that he expressed that agreement he behaved as if, whatever might be the state of affairs between their two countries, there was, at all events, peace between his garrison and the British squadron. He opened his hospitals to our wounded men and his markets to our ships, while his subordinate officers vied with each other in imitating his hospitable humanity. Nelson represented his generous conduct in terms of high eulogy to the authorities at home ; and wrote him a letter expressing the deep sense which he himself entertained of it, with the addition of a present which was probably the best that the *Theseus* could furnish, and which had all the recommendation of novelty and rarity at Teneriffe, a cask of English beer and a cheese.

Even had Nelson been aided by the military force which from the first he considered indispensable to ensure success in this enterprise, it may be questioned whether it would have proved sufficient, so great was the natural strength of the island, and so numerous and well-appointed the garrison which defended it. To a few ships and their crews, success was absolutely impossible. So incorrect, indeed, was the information which had given rise to the attack being made, that, as was afterwards ascertained, the very galleon, the capture of which was the principal object, was not at Santa Cruz at all.

The total loss which we sustained in this unfortunate attempt amounted to two hundred and sixty-three killed and wounded, of whom ninety-seven were drowned in the *Fox*. Of the survivors no one was more severely wounded than Nelson himself. His arm was frightfully shattered ; and the loss of blood which the wound occasioned might have proved fatal, had it not been for the presence of mind

of his stepson, Lieutenant Nisbet, who was in the boat with him, and who bound up the wound with handkerchiefs, and collecting four or five seamen, launched a boat and conveyed him back to the ship. Yet, suffering and weak as he was, he stopped the boat on her way, to aid the drowning crew of the Fox, and with his remaining hand himself saved many who were still struggling in the waters, greatly increasing the pain and danger of his wound by these exertions. On reaching the Theseus his arm was amputated, but he did not allow the loss of his limb to interrupt his exertions for a single day. In a few days he even spoke of himself as quite recovered; but the hurry in which the operation had been performed had caused some mismanagement in taking up the arteries, which subsequently caused him very severe suffering. He rejoined Lord St. Vincent at Cadiz on the 16th of August, and shortly afterwards proceeded to England for the recovery of his health; but the year expired before he was able again to report himself fit for service.

Nothing of any importance was this year done against the French in Europe by our navy; and it even seemed at one moment as if they were themselves about to save us the trouble of attacking their fleets. One of the most singular of all the revolutions which had agitated Paris in the course of the summer placed the chief power in the hands of a party which was not contented with expelling those of the opposite faction from office, unless it also reversed their policy; and one of its first measures was to disarm the fleets at Brest and Toulon, and disband the seamen. The new rulers even sold by auction many of the frigates which, from their size, were most available for purposes of commerce. But before this happened, several of their frigates were, as usual, at sea, and one or two actions between them and British cruisers, singly or in pairs, took place, the result of which was generally in our favour. The most remarkable engagement of the kind being one



in which our frigates the *San Fiorenzo*, 36, Captain Sir H. Neale, and the *Nymphe*, 36, Captain J. Cook, while cruising in March, at no great distance from Brest, fell in with *La Resistance*, 40, and *La Constance*, 22 ; and, though a French fleet of fourteen sail of the line and six frigates was in sight, captured them both, without either of our ships losing a single man. Even more creditable were the exploits of the *Hazard*, an 18-gun sloop, under Captain Ruddach, who captured two privateers of superior force to his own, the *Hood*, an 18-gun brig, and the *Musette*, a 20-gun privateer. And these achievements of the *Hazard* are in their turn surpassed by the boats of the *Magicienne*, 32, Captain Ricketts, and *Regulus*, 44, Captain Carthew, which in April forced their way into the harbour of Cape Roxo in St. Domingo, the favourite place of resort for the French privateers in that quarter; captured, sunk, or burnt not fewer than thirteen of those vessels, destroyed two batteries, which guarded the entrance to the harbour, and regained their ships in safety, this exploit also having been accomplished without the loss of a single man.

To a reader inexperienced in the chances of war, there is perhaps nothing which appears more incomprehensible than the very slight loss, or even the total avoidance of any loss whatever, with which gallant exploits are occasionally performed. Yet such a circumstance is far from derogating from the difficulty of the achievement, or from the valour of our men. In fact it really establishes their superiority, not only in skill, but in courage ; since it is owing partly to the precautions taken in the previous arrangement of such enterprises, precautions dictated by a full knowledge of the peril about to be encountered ; and partly to the coolness displayed in the hour of danger by those engaged, which prevents them from throwing away their shot, or wasting any efforts on points where success would not be decisive of the result ; and which at the same time disconcerts the enemy, and causes them to fall into both

those errors which the British scamen so avoid. A short time afterwards, Captain Ricketts performed another service of almost equal importance. As he was doubling Cape Tiburon, a promontory at the western extremity of the same island, he discovered several vessels in a small adjacent bay, and, from their appearance, and from the noise of some firing on shore, he conjectured that a French force was attacking a fort called Trois, which was in our occupation, and was the key to the possession of the whole district. He at once stood in with his two frigates, drove the enemy from a battery which they had constructed on the shore, landed some men, and carried off the guns with which it was armed, besides capturing the vessels, which were found to be loaded with provisions and all kinds of warlike stores. And this second service he accomplished with the loss of only four men killed and eleven wounded.

But our campaign in the West Indies this year was not one of unmixed triumph : on the contrary, it was the scene of one event which every man in the navy looked upon as branding the whole profession with almost indelible dishonour. There was on that station at this time a 32-gun frigate, named the *Hermione*, under the command of Captain Hugh Pigot, an officer not devoid of skill nor of a low kind of courage, but of one of the most savage and brutal tempers that ever disgraced a British seaman. In the early part of the year, he, or rather his boats, under the command of Lieutenants Reid and Douglas, had performed an exceedingly gallant exploit at Porto Rico, cutting out three French privateers and a great number of vessels which they had recently captured, and destroying a battery on shore, on which they relied for protection. But so incurably hard and ferocious was Pigot's disposition that even this splendid exploit failed to soften his heart towards the men who had performed it under his orders, and, as a natural consequence, failed also to win him any confidence or affection from them.

He continued to treat them all with daily increasing tyranny and cruelty, till at last he wrought them up to such a pitch of despair that they became utterly reckless, and regardless of every consideration but how they might most effectually wreak their vengeance upon him. Feeling that the deed which they contemplated would meet with no mercy, they determined on involving his officers in the fate they intended for him; and in September, while the frigate was still off Porto Rico, they murdered him, his clerk, the lieutenants, the purser, the surgeon, the lieutenant of marines, the boatswain, and one of the midshipmen. The few officers whom they spared, they turned adrift in a small boat, and then consummated their blood-thirsty atrocity by carrying the *Hermione* into the harbour of La Guayra on the north-eastern side of South America, and surrendering her to the Spaniards: who, too glad to get a British frigate at all to be particular about the means by which she came into their power, accepted her, manned and equipped her, added to the number of her guns and crew, and appointed an officer of high reputation, Don Raimond de Chalas, to command her.

For two years, in the service of her new masters, the *Hermione* cruised about the waters between the continent of South America and St. Domingo, while our frigates in vain endeavoured to intercept her; every officer and man in the service feeling her existence as a Spanish ship a stigma on the honour not only of the service but of the nation, not to be effaced but by her recapture. At last, two years after she had been betrayed to the enemy, Sir Hyde Parker, our Commander-in-chief on the Jamaica station, heard that she was about to sail from Puerto Cabello, a port a few miles to the westward of La Guayra, and he despatched Captain Edward Hamilton, in the 32-gun frigate *Surprise*, to intercept her on her voyage to the Havannah.

It was no very equal combat which he proposed to Captain Hamilton; for the *Hermione*, as armed by the Spaniards, carried at least ten guns more than the *Surprise*, and her crew doubled the number of the British sailors. But Hamilton and his men accepted the commission with enthusiasm; he even proposed to Sir Hyde, to prevent all possibility of missing her, to cut her out, before she sailed, if the Admiral would strengthen him with an additional boat and a boat's crew of twenty men. But Sir Hyde, by nature a man of great caution, thought such an attempt too desperate to be sanctioned, and adhered to his plan that the *Surprise* should intercept her at sea, directing Hamilton to cruize off Cape de la Vela for that purpose. He obeyed his orders: but, when he had hung about that station for nearly a month, his provisions became almost exhausted, and he began to fear that he should have to return to Jamacia without his prize. He determined at all events to steer first to Puerto Cabello, and ascertain whether she was still there, or whether she had eluded him. He found her there, apparently preparing to put to sea; being, in fact, already at the mouth of the harbour, where she lay at double anchor, moored head and stern between two batteries of unusual strength, armed with nearly two hundred guns. He was in a situation which most men would have found sufficiently embarrassing. His want of provisions would not allow him to remain there long. It was probable, too, that the *Hermione*, having seen him, would not sail till he had retired; while the finest ship in the British navy might well have shrunk from an engagement with the tremendous batteries that protected her where she lay. Nevertheless, he resolved to make an attempt to recover her. To carry her by open force was out of the question; but it seemed possible that the apparent security of her position might aid him by throwing her crew off their guard, and that the surprise of a night-attack might succeed where no other means could.

By night, then, he resolved to cut her out. Feeling to the utmost the desperate character of the undertaking, he first announced his intention to his officers, desiring them to support him when he made an address to the assembled crew. He was not deceived in his reliance on his officers ; but he had no need of their countenance to second his harangue, for every man on board was as eager for the enterprise as himself. They all felt that both the service and the country lay under a kind of stigma as long as a foreign ensign waved from the masthead of the *Hermione*, and they were all equally unwilling to leave the honour of lowering it to some more fortunate vessel. That same evening, therefore, the 24th of October, the deed was done ; every detail of it had been carefully planned, and the most minute orders were given to the officer in command of each boat. The whole six boats belonging to the frigate were to be employed, and they were to advance in two divisions. The part of the *Hermione* for which each was to make was distinctly laid down in written orders ; and even the crew of each boat was divided into parties, with separate duties assigned to each. One party was to cut the bower-cable, another the stern-cable ; active men were selected by name to go aloft the moment the vessel was boarded, and loose the topsails and the foresails which were seen to be ready bent ; while a sufficient crew was left in each boat, well furnished with ropes to take the vessel in tow the moment her cables should be cut, and at once to pull out of the harbour, even though the conflict might still be undecided on her deck. The entire number of men and officers employed amounted to a hundred and six. The guidance of the whole enterprise Hamilton would trust to none but himself, and a little before eleven he gallantly led the way in the pinnace. At first it seemed that his hope of surprising the enemy was disappointed. The boats were still a mile from her, when they were discovered and assailed by two Spanish gunboats, which fired upon

them. Hamilton pushed on, disregarding all inferior foes, and keeping his undivided attention on the Hermione; but his officers had not all the same presence of mind; and half the boats, including the largest of all, the launch, under the command of the first-lieutenant, engaged the gunboats, and lost much valuable time in repelling them. Hamilton had but three boats with him when he reached the destined object of his attack; he bade his crew follow him, and at once sprang up the side, when he found the Spanish crew, who had mistaken the cause of the fire of the gunboats, firing their guns also to aid them in their struggle, of whatever kind it might be, since the darkness prevented those on board from seeing more than the flashes in the distance. Hamilton had surprised them after all; for while thus engaged, they had no suspicion of his being among them, and some of his men had loosed the fore-sail, he himself was forcing his way to the quarter-deck, and other parties, under command of the gunner and the surgeon, were pushing on to the starboard gangway, before the Spaniards could collect themselves so as to make any resistance to their real assailants. Then for a few minutes a fierce struggle took place: Hamilton was by himself on the quarter-deck, when four of the enemy sprang upon him, one of whom dealt him a blow on the head with the butt of a musket, which for a moment disabled him, being given with such violence that the piece itself was broken. His men came promptly to his assistance. Meanwhile some of our sailors, through a fortunate forgetfulness of their precise orders, followed up the Spaniards, who tried to check their onset, till they drove them back on another party which took them in the rear; and thus placed between two fires the Spaniards lost many of their number. But they could afford a heavy loss and still remain far superior to our men; and they were continuing the struggle with dauntless courage, and as yet with a fair prospect of eventual triumph, when those who had been

engaged with the gunboats luckily arrived. One boat was manned with marines, who fired a well-aimed volley, and then, charging the Spaniards with the bayonet, drove sixty of them into a cabin, where they could no longer resist.

By this time the cables were cut, the foresail and fore and mizen-topsails were loosed to the wind, the crews left in the boats had made the tow-ropes fast, and were beginning to pull with all their might towards the Surprise. The contest still continued on deck for a while, and the batteries, perceiving or conjecturing what was going on, opened a heavy fire on the frigate, which not only injured her rigging, but in several instances took dangerous effect between wind and water. The Hermione, however, was now making way; after a very short time her crew surrendered, and within an hour from the time that Hamilton first came alongside she was his prize. All danger was not yet over: some of the crew were heard proposing to blow her up, as the only acceptable service left in their power to perform; but they were easily silenced when their scheme was known; and by two in the morning the Hermione was out of reach of the batteries, and once more a British ship. Her loss amounted to a hundred and nineteen killed, and ninety-seven wounded, a number sufficiently attesting the desperate valour with which her men had fought. Of the Surprise not one man was killed, and only twelve were wounded: Hamilton himself most severely of all. Besides the blow on the head, he had received a deep thrust from a pike in one thigh, a heavy sabre-cut on the other, and had been also struck by a grape-shot. To the end of his life he never entirely recovered the injuries he received on this eventful night; but he had vindicated the honour of his country, and had established his own fame by an exploit absolutely unequalled in its kind: and in these facts such a spirit as his found more than a recompense for all his sufferings. Justice was done

to his great merit even by those from whom he would least have expected such an acknowledgment. In the spring of the next year he was returning home for the cure of his wounds, when the Jamaica packet, in which he had taken his passage, was captured by a privateer; and he was conveyed to Paris, where General Bonaparte, then First Consul, though not usually generous or candid to a gallant, much less to a victorious enemy, treated him with marked distinction, and allowed him to recover his liberty by means of an exchange. At home he received the order of the Bath; while a still more unusual honour was paid to him by the authorities of Greenwich Hospital, who caused a picture of his exploits to be painted and hung in their Hall, that it might preserve to future generations a memorial of the noble deed and of the crew who performed it.

It was a singular circumstance that the greater part of the mutinous crew of the *Hermione* returned at different times to England, and even entered under feigned names into other ships of the Royal Service. If they thought that by subsequent good conduct they could atone for their great crime, they were much deceived. It had been too heinous to meet with forgiveness. Captain Pigot, no doubt, was a brutal tyrant: but his murdered officers probably were, some of them from their age must have been, innocent of all participation in his offences; and no provocation, no tyranny, could be admitted to excuse the betrayal of a King's ship to an enemy. Therefore, whatever time had elapsed, every man who was ever identified as having been of the crew that so disgraced themselves and their country, was arrested, tried, and, if his identity was established, hung without mercy.

If the French themselves avoided any serious naval disaster this year, by keeping their fleets in harbour, their northern allies suffered, from the war into which they had drawn or driven them, as severely as those in the south.



We have seen that in the spring, at the time of the mutiny at the Nore, though most of his ships deserted him and joined the mutineers, Admiral Duncan, with the two that remained faithful to their duty, proceeded to his station, managing, by the artful employment of signals, to conceal from the enemy the fact that his force was reduced to a couple of ships besides his own. As quickly as possible, the Admiralty reinforced him with a portion of the Channel Fleet : but, after the mutiny was put down, some of his own ships rejoined him, and those from the Channel Fleet returned to their original station. With this force, varying in amount from time to time, but never equal to that of the enemy, he blockaded the Texel with great vigilance throughout the summer.

It was a formidable force which was lying in those shallow waters, under the command of Vice-Admiral de Winter; four seventy-fours, seven sixty-fours, four 50-gun ships, and four heavy frigates, besides smaller vessels. And the design with which it had been collected was that it should join the French Admiral at Brest, and take the share formerly intended for the Toulon fleet, in a fresh invasion of Ireland. For the disaster of the previous year had by no means caused the belief that such an enterprise afforded the best chance of striking an important blow at our empire to be abandoned. And Hoche, though he was no longer to lead it, had visited the Dutch harbours at the beginning of the year to further the equipment of this fleet by encouragement and advice, and the practical suggestions of his great capacity. Such being the project of the enemy, Duncan's object was rather to blockade their fleet than to allow it to quit its shelter and fight it. The stake was too momentous to trust anything to chance ; and, if they once got to sea, he knew well that the accidents of wind and weather might baffle his best-concerted plans, and crown those of the enemy with a success which, however

temporary, could not fail to be productive of the greatest distress and injury to his country. He therefore lay immovable off the Texel, till, at the beginning of October, the exhaustion of his provisions and the violence of the equinoctial gales, which had severely strained many of his ships, drove him back to Yarmouth Roads to repair and revictual his fleet; leaving the *Circe* frigate, the *Active*, and the *Speculator* lugger to watch the movements of the enemy. De Winter took instant advantage of his withdrawal: on the 7th day of the same month the whole Dutch fleet came out, chasing the watch-ships before it. They sailed straight for Yarmouth to convey the news to the Admiral, but the *Active* outsailed her consorts. As she went she met a squadron under Captain Trollope, which Duncan had despatched back to the Dutch shores: and at the sight of them De Winter, thinking the whole British fleet behind them, desisted from his chase. Trollope then began to chase him, and never lost sight of him till he was rejoined by Duncan on the morning of battle. On the 9th the *Active* came in sight of Yarmouth Roads, with the signal flying that the enemy were at sea. The moment she was seen, the *Venerable* hoisted her signal for a general chase; and, before the *Active* could get alongside, the whole fleet had weighed anchor and was standing out to sea. As the flagship came up with the *Active*, the Admiral hailed Captain Hamilton, her Commander, and desired him to guide the fleet to the precise spot at which he had last seen the enemy. At daybreak, on the 11th, the whole fleet came in sight of the Texel, and were joined by Trollope's squadron. From Captain Trollope the Admiral learned the exact position of the enemy, and at once made all sail to the westward in pursuit of them. After an hour or two, he came in sight of them about nine miles from the shore, between the villages of Egmont and Camperdown; from the latter of which the battle

which ensued derives its name. He had hardly expected to overtake them so soon, and, as there was a great difference between the rate of sailing of his different ships, his fleet, when he first discovered the enemy, was widely spread. To bring it into close order he caused his leading ships to shorten sail. De Winter, the Dutch Admiral, was desirous above all things to avoid an action, not so much because his fleet was slightly inferior to the British, as because his instructions enjoined him to look upon his junction with the French in Brest as his chief object, from which he was to permit nothing to divert him. And, with this view, he took advantage of the respite thus afforded him to make for the land, hoping that he might be able to get so close to the shore, that its shoals and sandbanks, better known to him than they could be to his antagonist, might deter Duncan from pursuing him among them ; or, should he venture to do so, might prove a powerful auxiliary to himself. But the British Admiral, seeing this movement, and divining its object, pressed on, regardless of the straggling state of his own fleet, and made the signal for each ship to attack as fast as she could come up with an enemy. Another signal intimated that he should break the enemy's line, so as to get between it and the mainland, and then attack it to leeward. But the weather was very hazy, and this latter signal appears not to have been universally seen. It was, however, perceived and acted on by the second in command, Vice-Admiral Onslow in the *Monarch*, who, soon after mid-day, led the larboard division gallantly through the Dutch line three ships from the rear ; and shortly afterwards the *Venerable*, as the leading ship of the starboard division, having marked out the *Vryheid*, De Winter's flagship, as her own antagonist, attempted to pass astern of her, she being at that time the sixth ship in her line. The *States-General*, however, the flagship of Rear-Admiral Storey, seeing his design, pressed

so close up to his chief, that the British Admiral was compelled to change his course, and pass astern of the *States-General* instead, but, as he did so, he poured into her stern so terrible a fire that she was glad to fall back, leaving the *Venerable* free to close up alongside the *Vryheid*, as she had from the first desired to do.\*

\* The following is a list of the two fleets :—

#### BRITISH.

74	{	Venerable	...	...	...	Admiral Duncan.
						Captain Fairfax
		Monarch	...	...	...	Vice-Admiral Onslow.
						Captain O'Brien.
		Russell	...	...	...	Captain Trollope.
64	{	Montague	...	...	...	Captain Knight.
		Bedford	...	...	...	Captain Sir T. Byard.
		Powerful	...	...	...	Captain Drury.
		Triumph	...	...	...	Captain Essington.
		Bellicueux	...	...	...	Captain Inglis.
64	{	Agincourt	...	...	...	Captain Williamson.
		Lancaster	...	...	...	Captain Wells.
		Ardent	...	...	...	Captain Burgess.
		Veteran	...	...	...	Captain Gregory.
		Director	...	...	...	Captain Bligh.
50	{	Monmouth	...	...	...	Captain Walker.
		Isis	...	...	...	Captain Mitchell.
		Adamant	...	...	...	Captain Hotham.

Two frigates, a sloop, and four or five cutters, &c.

#### DUTCH.

74	{	Vryheid	...	...	...	Vice-Admiral de Winter.
						Captain Van Rossem.
		Jupiter	...	...	...	Vice-Admiral Reijntjes.
						Captain Meurer.
		Brutus	...	...	...	Rear-Admiral Bloys.
68	{	States-General	...	...	...	Rear-Admiral Storey.
						Captain Jacobson.
		Cerberus	...	...	...	Captain Zegers.
		Admiral de Vries	...	...	...	Captain Ruysen.
		Gelykheid	...	...	...	Captain Wiggerts.
64	{	Haerlem	...	...	...	Captain Musquetier.
		Leyden	...	...	...	Captain Rysoort.
		Hercules	...	...	...	Captain Holland.
58	{	Wasenaer	...	...	...	Captain Hinxt.
56	{	Beschermer	...	...	...	Captain Kraft.
50	{	Alkmaar	...	...	...	Captain Verdoorn.
	{	Delft	...	...	...	Captain Souters

With two large and two smaller frigates, and half-a-dozen corvettes.

So that of ships of the line and 50-gun ships the British had one more than

Others of our ships followed the gallant example of their chief, breaking the Dutch line at several points, and placing many of the Dutch ships between two fires : in many cases being themselves also in a similar position. By one o'clock the battle had become general, and was carried on with unsurpassed fierceness and courage on both sides. The two heavier of the Dutch frigates, the Mars and the Munnikendam, disregarded the immunity which their class usually gives to such vessels, and gallantly pressed into the conflict, using the heavy guns with which they were armed with great effect. The Mars, in particular, raked the Venerable severely while she was engaged with not fewer than three ships of the Dutch line. The crew of the Venerable had long been eager for battle ; as far back as June, when she was watching the Texel almost by herself, and the Dutch were seen with their topsails bent, as if preparing to come out, they had offered to advance into the narrow channel which leads out of the Texel, through which ships can hardly pass in more than single line, and in that position to stop the way against the whole fleet, or at least to fight their vessel till she sank. And now they proved that their proposal was no empty boast ; more than once every flag that she hoisted was shot away, and at last one of her men, a native of Sunderland, named James Crawford, nailed the Admiral's colours to the stump of the maintopgallant masthead, where, during the remainder of the day, it braved the battle and the breeze unhurt and triumphant. Her an-

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the Dutch ; while the difference in guns was about eighty in their favour. This difference was modified in some degree by the fact that the Mars, 44, the largest of the Dutch frigates, was taken by the enemy into their line. She had originally been a two-decker of 60 guns, and still had a heavier armament than one of our sixty-fours. Taking every thing into consideration, the size of the ships, the number and weight of the guns, and the number of the crews, the British fleet was superior to that of the Dutch by about a tenth.

tagonist, the *Vryheid*, was fought with equal courage, and almost equal skill ; after the rapidity and precision of the *Venerable's* broadsides had inflicted enormous loss on her, the *Ardent* attacked her on the other side, and the *Triumph* and *Director* poured many a raking fire across her decks : one after another her masts fell, the wreck of which rendered half her guns unmanageable ; her crew was swept away till De Winter himself, conspicuous by his commanding personal appearance and towering height, was left alone on its quarter-deck, and below there were hardly men enough left unhurt to man the pumps. Then, and not till then, did the gallant Admiral with his own hand haul down his colours, having earned the admiration of the whole British fleet ; and of no one more than his generous conqueror, whose victory he had so long delayed and imperilled.

The greater part of both fleets imitated the noble example of their leaders : some of our ships were such bad sailers, that they could not get up in time to take any effective part in the battle ; some, too, seemed unable, from the hazy weather, clearly to distinguish the Admiral's signals. A few also of the Dutch vessels, aware that they were not originally intended to fight at all, if a battle could be avoided, kept aloof, disregarding De Winter's signals for close and general action. Admiral Storey had his ship, the *States-General*, almost disabled by the issue of his attempt to foul the *Venerable* when breaking the Dutch line as already related : nevertheless he maintained a vigorous conflict for some time against a succession of antagonists, during which he lost above three hundred men killed and wounded,\* till at last he was driven out of the line and compelled to strike. No one, however, took

\* Mr. James represents the loss incurred by the *States-General* as comparatively slight ; but the statement given in the text was made by Admiral Storey himself to Lord Duncan, when he became his prisoner in 1801.

possession of him, and, as he gradually dropped astern so as to become clear of both fleets, he rehoisted his colours, and stood in towards the land, intending to coast along till he reached the Texel. The ships which had kept aloof, with one or two which, under less hardy captains than their fellows, had allowed themselves to be driven out of the line by our fire, followed him: their flight was successful, the water was very shallow, a heavy gale was coming up, so that it was impossible for Duncan to send any ships in pursuit of them; and thus six ships of the line, the Mars, and one of the smaller frigates, reached the Texel in safety. The rest of their fleet, two seventy-fours, five sixty-fours, two 50-gun ships and two frigates remained in our hands, trophies of as decisive a victory as at that time had ever been gained. It had been hardly won. The loss sustained by our fleet in general, and especially by the leading ships which had borne the brunt of the day, alike attested the heroism of both sides. Several of our ships had lost above a hundred men, and the entire number of casualties exceeded a thousand; while, though, as the Dutch, like ourselves, aimed chiefly at the hulls, but little damage was done to our masts and rigging, many of our ships were completely riddled with shot, and in some the men were employed day and night at the pumps to keep them afloat till they could cross the Channel to their own harbours. The Dutch, had of course, suffered even more severely; their loss in men was not accurately known; but their ships were so battered, that not one of the prizes could ever again be made fit for service: one indeed, the Delft, could not even be preserved as a trophy; the gale, which came on the day after the battle, completing the ruin which our fire had begun in her. As far as judgment may be formed from her loss of men, on no ship in the whole Dutch fleet had our iron hail fallen with more terrible effect: a hundred

and twenty of her men had fallen beneath our unerring cannonade ; and when our prize crew under the command of Lieutenant Bullen took possession of her, they found the ship herself had suffered even more than her crew. The Veteran took her in tow, but, on the third day after the battle, she was found to be sinking ; and we must follow the example of Mr. James\* in endeavouring to preserve the name of M. Heilberg, who had been her first-lieutenant till the fortune of war delivered himself and his ship in our hands, and who, with Lieutenant Bullen, afforded a splendid example of heroic courage and self-sacrifice, though it was not so fatal to our countrymen as it proved to the Dutch officer. The moment the Delft's state was made known, our ships sent their boats with all speed to save the crew : but all could not be removed in a single journey ; and, as the ship was rapidly settling, Lieutenant Bullen announced to Heilburg his intention of quitting her in the long-boat, and invited his prisoner to accompany him. Heilberg pointed to the wounded, as in greater jeopardy than himself : "How," said he, "can I go and leave these poor men?" Bullen grasped his hand, and vowed he would stay with him ; and, as boat after boat came to the rescue, the two officers, without a thought of their own safety, laboured with unwearied zeal to save those under their orders, and more especially those whose wounds disabled them from aiding themselves. All but one, or at the most, two boat-loads were saved, and those left behind were anxiously looking out for the boats to return but once more, when with a sudden plunge the Delft went down. The British officer sprang clear of the wreck and swam to a ship ; but the gallant Heilberg was never seen again : he had perished, the victim of his own self-devoted humanity, nor had any man fallen in either

\* ' Naval History of Great Britain from 1793 to 1819,' *in loco*.



fleets whose exploits had deserved a more undying glory.

Like that of St. Vincent, this victory also was one of great political importance, and one which was felt to contribute greatly to the safety of our own shores. And the rewards which were showered upon those who won it were commensurate to its importance. The King himself came down to the Nore with the intention of paying the Admiral a visit on board the Venerable, as, three years before, he had visited Lord Howe at Spithead. But the wind was too rough for the royal yacht to venture out, so Duncan missed that honour; but of those which did not depend on the weather he was not disappointed. A peerage, with the title of Viscount, and a pension were bestowed on himself. Onslow was made a baronet; medals and promotions were distributed with grateful and judicious liberality among the captains and lieutenants. It is to be wished that it could be added that all concerned deserved these honours. But that was not to be. Duncan was dissatisfied with the conduct of several of his ships; and certainly the slightness of the damage which some of them had sustained conclusively showed that they had borne but little share in the battle. Still, excuses were fairly to be made for most of them. Some of the vessels were notoriously bad sailers: some had joined the fleet so recently that they were not known to their new comrades, and hardly to the Commander-in-Chief. The weather, too, which, as has been mentioned, was so hazy as to prevent the signals of the Venerable from being clearly seen, hindered the execution of many of Duncan's orders. For one ship alone, the Agincourt, no excuse could be found; and accordingly, though his first-lieutenant was included in the promotion which took place, her captain, an officer named Williamson, on the return of the fleet to Eng-

land, was tried before a court-martial. Of cowardice and disaffection, he was deservedly acquitted ; but it was impossible to exculpate him from the charges of having disobeyed the Admiral's signals, and of having abstained from taking any share in the action. Of these offences he was convicted, though justice was satisfied by his being placed at the bottom of the list of post-captains, and declared incapable of serving in the navy for the future.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1798.

Disasters of the French navy in the year 1798 — The Marquis Coburg takes La Revanche — The Princess Royal beats off L'Aventurier — The Seahorse takes La Sensible — The Mars takes L'Hercule — The Brilliant beats off La Vertue and La Regnerée — Partial failure of a British expedition to Ostend — The French are repulsed from the isles of Marcouf — Expedition to Ireland — General Humbart lands in Killala Bay — is taken prisoner — M. Bompard sails from Brest — is defeated by Sir J. B. Warren — Seven ships out of nine are taken — Narrow escape of M. Savary and his squadron — We evacuate San Domingo — Operations in the Mediterranean — Lord St. Vincent sends Nelson to Toulon with a small squadron — Discontent of Sir W. Parker and Sir John Orde — Gale in the Gulf of Lyons — Great exertions of Captain Ball — Ten sail of the line are sent to reinforce Nelson.

IF, during the year of which we have just related the naval transactions, the disasters of war fell upon the allies of France rather than upon herself, in the ensuing year, 1798, the balance was redressed; and, while but little injury was inflicted on Spain or on Holland, the fleets and squadrons of France were equally unsuccessful in aggressive and defensive warfare, and the most imposing armament that quitted her harbours was nearly annihilated by the most splendid and decisive victory of which, up to that time, the maritime annals of any country could boast, and which even now has never been equalled, save by other blows dealt by the same redoubtable hand. If engagements between single ships could be taken as omens of the fortune of the approaching campaign, it opened badly for the enemy: since, in several encounters of that kind which took place, between vessels of every variety of rating and in every sea, the result was almost invariably in our favour. Off our own coast, in February, Lieutenant C. Webb, in the Marquis Coburg, a 12-gun cutter, took the 16-gun privateer, La Revanche, while Lieutenant Ross in the Recovery, 10, captured

another privateer of the same name, though superior to his own vessel both in the number of her crew and the calibre of her guns. Of ships of a larger class, Captain Foote, in the *Seahorse*, 38, while cruising in the Mediterranean, captured *La Sensible*, 36. And when on one occasion two ships of the line, the *Mars* and *L'Hercule*, met in single combat at no great distance from Brest, *L'Hercule* became the prize of the British ship; though the *Mars* purchased her success dearly by the loss of her Captain, Alexander Hood. The action was remarkable on more accounts than one. First from the exhibition which it afforded of the admirable sailing of the *Mars*, who, being, when *L'Hercule* was first seen, in company with the *Ramilies*, 74, and the *Jason*, a 38-gun frigate, in the course of the chase which she gave the enemy, outsailed not only the *Ramilies*, who carried away her foretopmast, but also the frigate; distancing the latter so completely that she had overtaken, fought and captured her antagonist some time before the *Jason* came up with her. And, secondly, from the unusually close quarters at which the ships engaged; for, as the *Mars* came up with the French ship, and was preparing to take up a favourable position, the anchors at the bows of each became entangled, and the two ships fell aboard of one another, hugging each other so closely that neither was able to run out her lower-deck guns, which were consequently fired from within. The French ship was fought with great gallantry, and was fearfully shattered before she struck; and the loss of life on each side, as might have been expected under such circumstances, was unusually great. Ninety of our men were killed and wounded; while the French loss more than trebled that amount.

An action fought a little later in the year, at the end of July, by Captain Blackwood in the 28-gun frigate, *Brilliant*, was even more creditable to British skill and courage than any of those just mentioned. She was

looking into the Bay of Santa Cruz when she was seen by two French frigates, *La Vertu*, 32, and *La Regenerée*, 36, who immediately weighed anchor and chased her. At the end of about six hours they began to come up with her; *La Regenerée* opening upon her with her bow-chasers, to which she replied vigorously from her stern-guns. As *La Vertu* was yet in the rear of her consort, Captain Blackwood hoped to cripple the leading ship, his first assailant, before she could come up; and, bearing up across the bows of *La Regenerée*, he poured a heavy broadside into her, which injured her foremast and bowsprit; repeating his fire till he had, for the moment, disabled her from continuing the chase. Consequently, when, as presently happened, *La Vertu* got within gunshot of him, he was able to direct his whole attention to her, still making all sail away, and replying with his stern-chasers to her broadsides without sustaining any injury at all equal to that which he inflicted. This action, coupled with that of the *Mars*, certainly afforded a convincing proof that both in manœuvring and in close combat the British sailors were alike superior to their enemies.

The only failure of our arms in the spring of 1798 occurred in the Netherlands; whither a small combined force, consisting, in its naval portion, of three frigates and a few smaller vessels, under Captain Home Popham, and as regards the army, of something less than twelve hundred men, commanded by Major-General Eyre Coote, was despatched at the beginning of May with the view of destroying or disabling a number of transports which were being collected in the Scheldt for some future invasion of our territories. A portion of the troops was disembarked without difficulty, and destroyed the locks and sluice-gates of the Bruges Canal, along which the transports were to be conveyed from Flushing, where they had been built, to Dunkirk and Ostend; as well as several small craft that were found in different parts of it; while two bomb-vessels,

which formed a part of our squadron, threw shells into the town and harbour of Ostend, doing considerable damage to the buildings and shipping, and receiving some, though far less injury themselves, from a heavy cannonade which was kept up on them from the batteries. When the General landed he was fully aware that he might not be able to secure his retreat, since the possibility of re-embarkation depended on the continuance of favourable weather ; but he was willing to risk his own safety to perform so important a service to his country. Unluckily, while the demolition of the canal and gunboats was still proceeding, the wind changed, and also freshened to such a degree that the boats were wholly unable to come in and take the troops off ; and by the next morning the French had collected some regiments, which attacked them with overpowering numbers, and, when sixty-five of our men had fallen, compelled the remainder to surrender. Unfortunate as this event was, it can hardly be called a naval disaster, and would not be mentioned here but from a desire to avoid the unfounded imputation of relating only our successes, and suppressing our failures, which our enemies at times show a great desire to fasten upon us.

The affair itself was very unimportant; and the failure, such as it was, was more than counterbalanced by a repulse which about the same time the French themselves sustained in an endeavour to recover the isles of Marcouf. They are two very small islets off the coast of Normandy, not larger than those known as the Holmes in the Bristol Channel : nor had they ever been considered of any importance till, in the year 1795, Sir Sidney Smith, while cruising in those waters, took possession of them ; and persuaded our Government to place a small garrison on them, which consisted of about five hundred seamen and marines, under the command of Lieutenant Price, commander of a small 6-gun sloop, the *Badger*. Lying as they do between Havre and Cherbourg they had enabled

us to cause great annoyance to the enemy's coasting-trade ; and the French looked upon it also as a kind of reproach to them that we should thus hold what was clearly a portion of their natural territory. Accordingly they this year resolved to assert their right to them, and expel or rather capture our garrison ; and with this view they prepared a numerous flotilla of gunboats at Havre, under the command of Captain Muskein, which took on board what was reckoned a sufficient land force under the command of General Point ; and early in the spring moved to attack the two islands. It happened that two of our frigates, the *Diamond* and the *Hydra*, under two very active and distinguished captains, Sir Richard Strachan and Sir Francis Laforey, were cruising close in-shore to the westward of Havre when the flotilla came out of the harbour, and a distant engagement took place between the frigates and the gunboats, which were heavily armed with long guns. To give the greater effect to her fire, the *Diamond* stood so close in-shore that for a moment she grounded, but she was soon got afloat again : and the flotilla, unable to force its way by her and her consort, returned to Havre.

Two or three weeks afterwards, Captain Muskein received a strong reinforcement, consisting of several heavy gunbrigs and other smaller vessels, and also of four or five regiments, which, as they outnumbered the British garrison on the islands in the proportion of about ten to one, would find, it was expected, no difficulty whatever in overpowering it. With this force, at the beginning of May, he quitted his harbour and coasted along till he reached La Houque, a roadstead a little to the north-west of the islands, where he waited till an entire absence of wind should render it impossible for the British cruisers to approach St. Marcouf, so as to support their countrymen ; and a few days afterwards, when the wind fell to a perfect calm, he made his attempt. Fortunately

Lieutenant Price, by some means or other, had received a warning of the attack that was about to be made, and though he and his garrison were left, as the French had calculated, wholly to their own resources, he prepared to face the danger. The assailants were favoured by a night of extreme darkness, which enabled them to reach the islands without the slightest molestation; but the moment that the light of dawn revealed the position which they had taken up, they found themselves exposed to a cannonade such as they had not imagined to be within the means of our men to deliver. The fiercest attack was made upon the westernmost of the two islands. The defences consisted of two or three well-placed batteries and redoubts; and these, as the French boats, laden with troops, pulled into the landing-place, poured a well-aimed and deadly fire amongst them, which sank boat after boat, involving their crews and the soldiers on board in one common destruction. It was in vain that the gunbrigs, from within a quarter of a mile of the shore, directed no fewer than eighty heavy guns against the batteries. The whole of the loss which they were able to inflict upon the garrison amounted to one man killed and four wounded. The division that attacked the eastern island, where the garrison was commanded by Lieutenant Bourne, had even less success, as they failed to disable a single man; while Bourne, who, though his batteries were weaker in respect of the number of their guns, had two sixty-eight pound carronades in one of them, poured upon his assailant a still more crushing fire than had been in the power of his brother officer to deliver. The French lost above twelve hundred men, of whom nearly three-fourths were drowned through the destruction of the boats which conveyed them. The survivors retreated, and had not yet got back to La Houque when Captain Hotham in the *Adamant*, with one or two smaller vessels, having been attracted by the noise of the firing, was seen pressing on, with all the



speed which the continued calm would permit him to make, to aid his countrymen. The want of wind, however, prevented him from assisting them (and indeed they had well shown that they needed no assistance), or from harassing the enemy in their retreat. He returned to his station, and the two lieutenants were rewarded by promotion, which was never better deserved.

The isles of St. Marcouf so clearly belonged to the French territory that the attempt to recover them could not be called an act of aggressive warfare. But the other expeditions, which issued from the northern ports of France, were a renewal of the attempt at an invasion of our own shores: Ireland again being selected as our most vulnerable point. They did not deserve success, since the hopes of such a consummation were founded not on French valour but on Irish treason, and their failure could by no possibility have been more complete. The enemy were far from being discouraged by the total suppression of the insurrection which had broken out in Ireland in May, and the discovery and execution of the principal leaders; believing the assurances that these events were chiefly owing to the absence of French co-operation, and that there were still vast bodies of men only waiting for the appearance of an effective foreign force to take the field again. Accordingly, in August, a squadron of four frigates, under Commodore Savary, sailed from Rochefort, and, escaping our cruisers, landed General Humbert and a few hundred men in Killala Bay; but he had not advanced far into the country when he was surrounded by General Lake, and compelled to surrender with all his force. And the news of his discomfiture had not reached France when, on the 16th of September, a more powerful squadron, with three thousand troops on board, sailed from Brest, under the command of Commodore Bompard, and, making for the same part of the Irish coast, arrived off Tory Island on the 11th of October. One

74-gun ship, the *Hoche*, eight frigates, and a schooner, *La Biche*, composed the squadron ; and it had approached almost within sight of the intended landing-place before it met with any equal British force. No part of the enemy's course, however, had been unknown to our Admirals : almost from the time that they left their harbour, they had been watched by one or other of our frigates ; especially by the *Ethalion*, 38, Captain Countess, who with an admirable mixture of skill and hardihood hung upon their skirts, and being presently joined by Captain C. Herbert, in the *Amelia*, 38, and Captain Durham in the *Anson*, 34, kept near enough to observe all their motions, without once allowing them to come within gunshot. So bold a front did these three frigates show that they prevented M. Bompert from making any attack upon a large merchant-fleet of above a hundred sail, which passed within a few miles of him. They penetrated all his attempts to deceive them as to his object, when he bent his course towards the S.W., as if bound to the Antilles ; and never quitted him for a moment till he had proceeded so far towards the north, that it could no longer be a question that Ireland was his destination. Then they despatched the *Sylph*, an 18-gun brig, which was in their company, to convey the intelligence to Admiral Kingsmill, at that time the commander-in-chief on the Irish station ; and, having lost sight of M. Bompert in some rough and thick weather, they bore up themselves towards the north, and, on the morning of the 11th, fell in with Sir J. B. Warren, who, as commodore of a small squadron, was cruising off the coast of Donegal ; and was, therefore, without being previously aware of the fact, in the immediate neighbourhood of the invaders. The ships which he had with him were the *Canada*, 74, which bore his own pendant ; the *Foudroyant*, 80, Captain Byard ; the *Robust*, 74, Captain Thornborough ; the *Magnanime*, 44, Captain de Courcy ; and the *Melampus*, 36, Captain Lord Ranelagh ; and the

junction of Captain Countess and his frigates gave him a slight superiority in force to the French.

At mid-day, on the 11th of October, as soon as the two squadrons were seen by one another, being then about twelve miles apart, the French, abandoning their intention of standing in to the land to disembark the troops, hauled close to the wind, which was at N.N.W., while Warren made the signal to his squadron for a general chase, and also for the ships to form in succession as they arrived up with the enemy; but as night came on the wind freshened almost to a gale, doing some damage to both squadrons, but most injuring the French. In the rough weather which they had encountered a few days before, the *Anson* had lost a top-mast and a top-gallantmast, and the *Hoche* had sprung one of her masts; and now the same ships were again unfortunate: the *Anson* carrying away her mizenmast and some of her yards, and the *Hoche* losing her maintopmast and her other topgallantmasts, and greatly injuring her mainsail; while *La Resolue*, 36, sprang a leak which at first seemed beyond the power of her crew to stop. These accidents, which were more unfavourable to the French than to the British, so greatly hindered the course of the former and disconcerted their reckoning, that, when day broke on the 12th, they found themselves almost in the middle of our squadron, which, however, was widely scattered. It was now in Warren's power to bring the enemy to action whenever he chose; and, as soon as he had got his ships together in something like order, he made the signal to engage. The action began soon after seven. *M. Bompard* forming his squadron in a single line, with the *Hoche* the third ship from the rear; the *Robust* leading the British line, and pouring a passing fire into the rearmost frigates, *L'Embuscade* and *La Coquille*, as she pressed on to engage the *Hoche*. Crippled already, the French line-of-battle ship had no chance

of escape. The Robust was not her only assailant; she was also raked by the Magnanime, while the Amelia and Melampus found several opportunities of adding to her confusion by well-directed and destructive shots. Some of the Canada's guns, too, had reached her before M. Bompert, who had fought his ship against these overpowering odds for nearly three hours, hauled down his colours. L'Embuscade struck likewise, as did the Coquille; both frigates having emulated the valour of their Commodore by their gallant resistance; and early in the afternoon La Bellone, 36, surrendered after a single combat with the Ethalion, in which she lost between sixty and seventy men: while the casualties on board the British frigate amounted to but one man killed and four wounded.

The other five French ships, not having yet been overtaken by any of ours, were making all sail to the S.W. in hopes of effecting their escape. The Anson, whom the loss of her mizenmast had prevented from getting up to take any part in the action, lay almost across their path, and they all fell upon her with more or less vigour, hoping by her capture to counterbalance in some apparent degree the discomfiture of their squadron. The Loire led the attack, her Captain having hoisted British colours over his own ensign in order to deceive Captain Durham, and to lead him to withhold his fire; but the trick was not so well carried out in all its parts but that the English captain discovered it in time. He opened a heavy fire upon the Loire the moment that she came within his reach; and though he could not avoid great injury to his own ship, and heavy loss among his crew, he beat off all five of his assailants, who indeed could not afford time for more than a hurried onslaught, for three of the English squadron, the Canada and Foudroyant being among them, were chasing them with every sail set; and the delay which their combat with the Anson occasioned enabled their pursuers to gain on them considerably. In

the hope that some of them might effect their escape, the French ships had spread: one, *La Romaine*, made for Donegal Bay; two more, *L'Immortalité* and *La Resolue*, coasted along to the southward; while the last pair, *La Loire* and *La Semillante*, bore to the westward towards the open sea. Only two of the number ever regained their native harbours, though they did not all become prizes to the squadron which was their original antagonist. *La Resolue* was, indeed, taken by the *Melampus*, and *La Loire* by the *Anson*: but, before *La Loire* thus succumbed to the object of her previous attack, she had fallen in with and fought a severe action with another frigate unconnected with Warren's squadron, the *Mermaid*, 32, Captain Newman, which, though vastly inferior to her in every respect, almost disabled her, and finally put her to flight, driving her into the very teeth of the *Anson*, which, when thus exposed to this second encounter with her, had the assistance of an 18-gun brig, the *Kangaroo*, Captain Brace, which was far from being useless at the end of the combat. *L'Immortalité*, too, fell to the share of a frigate which had made no part of Warren's force, the *Fishguard*, 38, Captain Byam Martin. What difference in point of force existed between the two vessels was in favour of the French ship: her broadsides being by 25 lbs. the heavier, her crew the more numerous by nearly fifty men; but these advantages availed her nothing. The crew of *L'Immortalité* fought bravely, and pursuing the usual tactics of their countrymen, made such havoc with the *Fishguard's* rigging that their ship very nearly escaped; but the British sailors repaired their damages with extraordinary energy and despatch, and, giving chase, overtook their flying foe, and, in less than four hours from the time when the first gun was fired, compelled her to surrender. Thus of Bompert's whole force all were captured but two. And Commodore Savary's squadron but narrowly

escaped a similar fate. That officer, after having landed General Humbert, returned to Rochefort; and in the second week in October, again set sail with his four frigates, partly to ascertain what success the General had met with, and partly to convey to him a small reinforcement, should he require it. He again reached Ireland in safety, and, learning the total discomfiture of his countrymen, hastened back to his own harbours. He had not, however, got clear of the Mayo coast when he fell in with two of our line-of-battle ships and a frigate: the *Cæsar*, 80, Captain Roddam Home;\* the *Terrible*, 74, Captain Sir R. Bickerton; and the *Melpomene*, 38, Captain Sir C. Hamilton. They of course gave chase, and, as our ships were all good sailers, the situation of the French frigates seemed almost desperate. The *Terrible* had already got within gunshot of them, and the *Cæsar* was rapidly overtaking them, when a sudden squall of wind carried away her foretopmast and maintopgallantmast, the wreck at the same time doing great injury to her sails; and presently a second squall did even greater damage to the *Terrible*. The flying enemy, who had been throwing guns and horses overboard to lighten themselves, had no longer anything to fear from their pursuers, who were thus forced to abandon the chase at the moment that it was on the point of being crowned with success. M. Savary reached Rochefort without any further interruption; but these accumulated disasters caused the project of an invasion of Ireland to be laid aside, and some years elapsed before any squadron or fleet quitted a French harbour on a similar errand.

On the other side of the Atlantic nothing of great importance took place either with the Spaniards or with the

\* By a singular slip, Mr. James represents the *Cæsar* as under the command of Sir J. Saumarez: who was not appointed to her till the February of the next year; and also, as he correctly states in another part of his work, was at this time in the *Orion*, conveying home the Nile prizes.

French. It was no triumph to either country that we now abandoned the posts which, almost from the beginning of the war, we had held in St. Domingo. The footing which, in the autumn of 1793, we gained in that splendid island, when, without firing a single gun, we got possession of Cape Nicholas Mole, one of the finest harbours in the whole of the West Indies, if due partly to the resolution and address of Captain Ford of the 50-gun ship *Europa*, was also to be attributed, in at least an equal degree, to the fear which the French garrison entertained of the negroes. In truth they were already giving signs of a disposition to rise against their masters. In the series of strange and tragic events which ensued when that disposition developed itself into action it is hard to say which was the most marvellous, the courage (not indeed unmixed with ferocity) and genius displayed on the one side, or the merciless cruelty and treachery practised by the other. But the history of those transactions belongs to a later period and another country. In 1794, Ford ably and energetically pursued the advantages he had already gained. He had been placed in command of a powerful squadron; and a small force of fifteen hundred men, under Brigadier-General White, was sent to co-operate with him. Ford took Cape Tiburon, and the combined force reduced Fort Brissotin and Port-au-Prince, the capital of the French portion of the island. And, though the French succeeded in throwing reinforcements into the places which they still retained, we made gradual progress in the reduction of their side of the island, while the natives showed unmistakable signs of preferring our rule to that of the French. But, gradually, the contemplation of the hostilities carried on between the different European powers thus contending for the mastery, suggested to them the idea of establishing their own independence. A chief arose from among their own ranks, Toussaint L'Ouverture, eminently calculated by his ambition to stimulate such a spirit, and by his abilities to

guide it in a right direction ; and the new character which the affairs of the island assumed in consequence, coupled with the unhealthiness of the climate, which we had now fully ascertained by the ravages which disease had made among our troops, determined us to desist from our attempts to establish any settlement of our own there. Accordingly, General Maitland, who had succeeded to the command of the land-force, concluded an agreement with Toussaint, by which, in return for the cession of all the posts which we held in the island in a sound and defensible condition, Toussaint promised his most ample protection to any British subjects who chose to remain in the country ; and the duty of the naval squadron was now limited to the removal of the garrisons and stores, and of a number of brass guns and mortars belonging to the French, which we retained as trophies and testimonies, not only of our occupation of the island, but also of the voluntary character of our departure.

Still, if the abandonment of St. Domingo was in some degree a disappointment of our former projects, it was no triumph to the French, who indeed had no share in causing it ; and who, having their attention fixed on very different objects, left our possessions in the West Indies entirely unmolested. The Spaniards were less prudent. Our settlement in the Bay of Honduras had long been an eyesore to them ; and, as our garrison did not exceed a few hundred men, supported by a single 64-gun ship, the *Merlin*, Captain Moss, two 6-gun schooners, and three gunboats, each armed with only a single gun, they thought a favourable opportunity was presented for expelling us. Accordingly, in September, they prepared a flotilla of upwards of thirty schooners and sloops, with two or three heavy guns a-piece, besides swivels, and a body of two thousand troops. But, overwhelming as this force seemed in comparison with that against which it was moving, it was totally defeated. Our position was greatly pro-



ted by a shoal which lay in its front, and which could only be crossed at one or two narrow passages. Three times were the Spanish vessels repulsed in endeavouring to force their way by one or other of these passages; and when, abandoning that attempt, they moved against Balize, Captain Moss anticipated their design, and reached that town before them. Baffled there, they returned to their former station, where they made one more attack on Moss and his little squadron. A warm engagement ensued, which lasted two hours and a half. We did not lose a single man; but the Spaniards, who at last cut their cables and retreated in great disorder, many of their vessels being towed away by boats, were supposed to have suffered severely. A day or two afterwards they retired altogether. The enterprise was never repeated; and, in spite of the disturbances and changes to which the surrounding districts have been exposed, we have ever since been left in peaceful possession of our small but not unimportant settlement.

But the scene of the chief transactions of the year, of the only ones that affected the general course and results of the war, lay in the Mediterranean. During the winter Lord St. Vincent had remained in the Tagus, keeping a small look-out squadron off Cadiz; but the enemy's fleet had not stirred, and matters were still exactly as they had been in the preceding autumn, when, on the 29th of April, Nelson, now fully recovered from his wound, joined the fleet in the Vanguard, 74, with Berry, whom we have already seen distinguishing himself under his command in the battle of St. Vincent, for her captain. Lord St. Vincent had been waiting with anxiety for his return, with a view to send a small squadron into the Mediterranean to ascertain the state of the French preparations in Toulon: having no one about him to whom he liked to entrust a commission certainly requiring the most acute and correct judgment, and not unlikely

to call for the exercise of prompt decision, and of bold and skilful seamanship. It was known that the French were equipping a large force at Toulon, but rumours differed greatly as to its destination, and whether it was intended to act against Sicily, or Portugal, or Ireland: its real object no one had as yet divined. The instructions, therefore, which the Commander-in-chief gave Nelson, while they left much to his discretion, imposed on him also particular duties, varying with the information which he might gather, or with the judgment which he might form, which were not unlikely to be very difficult to execute. Most especially was he enjoined, in the event of the French fleet steering westward to join a Spanish force known to be lying at Carthagea, to take care to outstrip it, and to pass through the straits before it, so as to bear timely intelligence of its movements to Lord St. Vincent, and enable him to bring it to action before it could join the Cadiz fleet.

As the squadron which could be given him did not exceed two seventy-fours besides the Vanguard and two frigates, it is not strange that Lord St. Vincent was careful to whom to confide so arduous an employment; but all did not enter into his feelings. His selection of Nelson showed a conspicuous and salutary disregard of the deference too commonly paid to seniority; for there were in the fleet at the time two Admirals of older standing, Sir W. Parker and Sir John Orde, both of whom considered themselves aggrieved at being thus, as they conceived, passed over. They went so far as to address a formal remonstrance to Lord Spencer, then First Lord of the Admiralty, on the subject; and Sir John Orde even tried to fasten a personal quarrel on Lord St. Vincent, at last sending him a challenge, which the Admiralty formally commanded him to disregard. Lord St. Vincent justified himself to the discontented officers on the broad and undeniable principle "that those who

are responsible for measures have an undoubted right to choose the men whom they prefer to carry them into execution." But he must have been gratified by soon afterwards finding his judgment unconsciously confirmed by Lord Spencer himself. At the beginning of May that minister sent him a powerful reinforcement, and, writing on the very day on which Nelson quitted the fleet in pursuance of Lord St. Vincent's orders, desired him, on the receipt of that reinforcement, to detach a squadron of not less than twelve sail of the line besides frigates into the Mediterranean; and, in a private letter which accompanied the formal despatch, pointed out Nelson as the officer to whom the command could most properly be confided. Subsequently the credit of having prompted the selection of Nelson was claimed for the King himself. To whomsoever it was due, no appointment ever contributed more to the glory of the nation and the advantage of Europe.

The ships originally placed under Nelson's command were the *Orion*, Captain Sir J. Saumarez; the *Alexander*, Captain A. Ball; the 32-gun frigates, *Emerald* and *Terpsichore*; and the *Bonne Citoyenne* sloop: with these, on the 9th of May, he quitted Gibraltar, and reached Cape Sicie, a headland close to the mouth of the harbour of Toulon, on the 17th. Having captured a small French corvette, and examined the whole of the crew separately, he learnt that there were nineteen sail of the line in the harbour, fifteen of which were ready for sea; and that General Buonaparte (whose Italian campaign of the preceding year had sufficiently shown that no enterprise in which he was about to take a part should be lightly regarded) was in the town vigorously hastening the embarkation of an army: though it was doubtful whether he was himself to accompany it, and wholly unknown for what quarter of the world it was destined. Nelson sent the *Bonne Citoyenne* back to the fleet with this intelligence, and kept close in himself: knowing, of course, that he was utterly

unable to contend with the French fleet if it should come out; but trusting that an opportunity might offer itself for doing something, though for the moment his hopes were limited to the capture of some frigates which had been more than once within sight of his squadron without, as he trusted, having discovered its presence. His hopes were nearly blasted by an unforeseen disaster: the weather was so fine that a storm which could endanger such ships and such sailors seemed the very last danger to be apprehended; the wind, which on the 19th had been fresh from the north-west, had, on the morning of the 20th, abated; the Vanguard's crew again got their topgallant-masts and yards aloft; the frigates picked up a valuable prize; all was bright for the present, and apparently full of good omen for the future, when, as evening came on, the wind again rose, and signs of a coming storm warned the captains to strike their small spars and reduce their canvas. By midnight the gale, which had been rapidly increasing, had become so violent that all the sails of the Vanguard were furled, and an endeavour was made to ride out the storm under a main stormstaysail. Even this precaution proved unavailing: soon the maintopmast went over the side, it was followed by the mizentopmast; and presently the foremast itself was heard to give a sudden crack, and fell in two pieces across the forecastle. As far as any power of movement went, the Vanguard was almost a wreck; and her situation seemed likely to become worse, for the wreck of the masts which had fallen endangered the rest. And even the fact of the rigging being new added to the danger, since the rope stretched so much that it afforded no support to those masts which were still standing. One portion of the wreck too, and the best bower-anchor, which had got loose, were bumping against the ship's bottom, and threatening to stave it in; while the furious wind was driving her rapidly towards the now hostile shore of Corsica. Then,

in this distress and imminent danger, was seen what courage and seamanship could do. By means of the sprit-sail, now scarcely more than a rag, the crew contrived to wear the ship, and thus averted the most pressing of her dangers, that of being driven on shore: but still the gale raged with undiminished violence; the ship rolled dreadfully, and shipped so much water that it became necessary to scuttle the lower deck. At last, on the afternoon of Tuesday the 22nd, the storm, after having lasted nearly thirty-six hours, began to go down; and Nelson resolved to endeavour to reach Sardinia. Most fortunately the *Orion* and *Alexander*, though they also had suffered, and had lost topsails, were still capable of doing good service; and when it was found impossible to reach the Bay of Oristano, which was the point first selected, the *Alexander* took the *Vanguard* in tow, and tried to get more to the southward to the island of San Pietro.

It could hardly be said that the danger was much diminished, as the crippled ships were moving along within three miles of a coast, iron-bound, void of anchorage, and entirely unknown to the whole squadron; while a heavy swell drove them towards the shore, and the wind had fallen so completely that there seemed no means of working off from it. Those on board could plainly distinguish the surf as it broke on the rocks, and so hopeless at one time did the case appear, that Nelson commanded Captain Ball to cast the *Vanguard* off, fearing lest the result of his efforts could only be to involve the *Alexander* in her destruction. But Ball was worthy of his chief; he disregarded the order, and still kept firm hold of the flag-ship. Providentially, at daybreak on Wednesday, a light breeze sprang up, filling the sails of the *Alexander*, and enabling her to increase her distance from the shore, and so to proceed in greater safety; and by midday she and her Admiral had anchored in the sheltered and safe harbour of the little island of San Pietro; the *Orion* soon

joined them, and their united crews set to work to refit. It was well for them all that they had been driven down to San Pietro instead of reaching Oristano, for the French fleet had slipped out from Toulon a day or two before, had escaped the gale, and, hearing of this squadron, had detached some ships to look for it; which, had they fallen in with it in their existing condition, would have had but little difficulty in defeating it. The Sardinian Government had recently made a treaty with France which forbade the exercise of hospitality to a British fleet, so that our ships were forced to rely on their own resources for the repair of their damages; but the skill and energy shown by all concerned astonished even Nelson himself: the abilities of Saumarez had long been known to him, but he was scarcely acquainted with Ball, and had conceived a prejudice against him, which was now for ever dispelled. He acknowledged his obligations to him in the most public manner, and ever afterwards looked upon him as one of his most tried and truest friends, as well as one of his best and most trustworthy officers.

In four days the Vanguard was again at sea, cruising about in search of the enemy: not, indeed, completely refitted, since no spars could be procured to equip her with masts of the proper size; a maintopmast was forced to do duty for a foremast, a topgallantmast for a topmast, and the rest of her rigging was of course reduced in the same proportion. As the ship, however, was an unusually good sailer, she could afford to submit to such makeshifts better than the generality of men-of-war: and so eager was Nelson not to lose a day in his search for the enemy that he would not spare time to take her to Gibraltar; while, to mark his sense of the good conduct of his crew in their late dangers, he would not shift his flag, but remained in the Vanguard, half-rigged as she was, till the close of the year. He soon received intelligence which made amends to him for all his trials and exertions; the

day before the storm fell upon him in the Gulf of Lyons, Sir Roger Curtis, with eight sail of the line, had joined Lord St. Vincent off Cadiz ; and the Admiral had already received a despatch from home, announcing the approach of this reinforcement, giving him the further directions, to which allusion has already been made, on its arrival to send a squadron into the Mediterranean, and suggesting the appointment of Nelson to command it. Fully coinciding in the wisdom of this measure, Lord St. Vincent had selected a squadron of nine sail of the line with great care ; had them all ready to start ; and the moment that Curtis appeared in sight he despatched them, under the command of Troubridge in the Culloden to find Nelson. On the 5th of June, Captain Hardy, in the Mutine brig, reached the Vanguard with news of their approach, and on the 7th the whole squadron joined him. Troubridge had been strengthened on his way by another ship, the Leander, 50 ; and Nelson, who now found himself in the situation which had long been the object of his highest ambition, exultingly pronounced himself a match for any French force afloat.

The boast was dictated by no ill-founded confidence : the last few days had fully proved the great courage and fortitude, and skill and loyalty of Ball and Saumarez ; Troubridge, the captain of the Culloden had been his comrade at Teneriffe, and was of the whole service the man of whose talents and heroism he had the highest opinion. The Theseus had borne his own flag in the preceding year ; Miller her captain then, had been his captain before on the memorable day of St. Vincent, and the friendship of the two officers had been cemented not only by the dangers which they had shared but by the mutual esteem in which they held each other's private virtues.\* Hood of the Zealous, Foley of the Goliath,

\* Nelson more than once in his letters speaks of Captain Miller as the most virtuous man he had ever known.

Thompson of the *Leander*, were scarcely less favourably known to him ; and the others (not one name of such a fleet may be passed over), Darby of the *Bellerophon*, Louis of the *Minotaur*, Peyton of the *Defence*, Gould of the *Audacious*, Westcott of the *Majestic* (soon to meet a glorious death in the conflict for which all were longing, but of which he alone was not to enjoy the triumph), and Hallowell of the *Swiftsure*, gave, before long, ample proof that they had only wanted opportunity to make their names as widely known as those of their more famous because more fortunate comrades. In one respect alone Nelson had to complain of the inefficiency of his fleet, he had no frigates. Besides the *Emerald* and *Terpsichore*, he had been joined by two more, the *Flora* and *Alcmene*, after he left Cadiz ; but they, not supposing it possible for him to keep the sea after the damage which he had received in the gale, had quitted the rendezvous which he had given them : during his whole cruise they never rejoined him, and their absence not only caused him ceaseless vexation, but, as will be presently seen, greatly crippled his exertions, and was very near depriving him altogether of the only reward he desired for them, a meeting with the enemy.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

1798.

Brueys with the French fleet quits Toulon — Takes Malta — Nelson pursues him — Misses him in a fog — Reaches Alexandria — Returns to Sicily — Sails again towards the East — Obtains intelligence at Coron — Arrives again at Alexandria — Battle of the Nile — Capture of the *Leander* — Great consequences of Nelson's victory — Inadequacy of the reward bestowed on him — Exertions of Troubridge — Sir J. Saumarez is sent home with the prizes — Captain Hood is left in command at Alexandria — Nelson goes to Naples — Blockades Malta — Assists the Neapolitan Government — Conveys the King of Naples to Sicily — Sir Sydney Smith is sent to Alexandria — Indignation of Lord St. Vincent and Lord Nelson — Reduction of Minorca — The *Princess Royal* beats off the *Adventurier* — Capture of the *Seine* — Cutting-out expeditions — Captain Cook and Captain P. Malcolm at Manilla — Captain Bland takes a Genoese pirate — Captain Manley Dixon in the *Lion* engages four Spanish frigates, and takes one — The *Sirius* takes two Dutch vessels — The *Clarente* escapes from Sir J. B. Warren — The *Bayonnaise* takes the *Ambuscade*.

THE French fleet, under Admiral Brueys, as has already been mentioned had quitted Toulon on the 19th of May ; for the next day or two it had kept along the coast to the eastward, till it reached Genoa, and, as it had thus avoided our cruisers, no certain intelligence could be obtained of its movements or objects, till, on the 14th of June, the *Leander* spoke a vessel which had seen it ten days before off Trapani, in Sicily, steering as the master reported to the eastward. It is strange that there should have been any difficulty in procuring the most precise intelligence of its movements, for the men of war were accompanied by above three hundred transports, freighted with an army of 20,000 men, under the command of Buonaparte, who was himself a passenger in the flagship. Yet the greater part of the information which reached Nelson from time to time proved incorrect ; and the first

positive knowledge that he obtained concerning the enemy was that on the 15th of June they had captured Malta, that they had quitted it on the 19th, and had continued their course towards the east. Nelson now made up his mind that they were bound for Alexandria, believing that they would easily overrun Egypt, and that their principal object was to make the conquest of that country a stepping-stone to their invasion of our Indian dominions. It is a singular proof of his political acuteness that he supposed them to be acting in concert with Tippoo, the great Sultan of Mysore: a suspicion, the accuracy of which was subsequently established by the discovery of a correspondence between that ruler and the French General, but which at that moment probably no other man in Europe entertained. On the 21st of June, therefore, he set sail from Sicily, and steered for Alexandria, assuring Lord St. Vincent and Lord Spencer that, could he only find the enemy, he would not lose a moment in bringing them to action.

His want of frigates now began to prove a severe hindrance to his speed; forcing him, as it did, to make repeated halts to obtain intelligence which they would have procured for him without such delay. The wind was fair, and his progress might have been rapid; but he could get no news of the enemy: he met but two or three vessels, none of which had seen them. The weather was often hazy, compelling him to keep his fleet close together; (it was subsequently ascertained that on one occasion, on the night of the 22nd of June, the two fleets were within a very few miles of each other, but that a fog had kept them from each other's sight); on the 25th he reached Alexandria and found that nothing had been seen nor heard of the French. Disappointed and mortified, but as convinced as ever of the soundness of his judgment, he retraced his steps, working back towards Sicily, but repeatedly crossing the Mediterranean to and fro from

south to north, and from north to south, to give himself the better chance of meeting, or obtaining intelligence of them. His anxiety was almost insupportable: he suspected that he should be blamed for having left the whole westerly portion of the Mediterranean unprotected, while thus acting on his own judgment alone. And it afterwards proved that in this surmise too he was correct, since there were critics at home loud in condemnation of him the moment that they learnt that his chase of the enemy had hitherto been unsuccessful. Still, with the self-reliance of magnanimous genius, he never for a moment doubted the soundness of his judgment.

To his captains and crews the hours passed less heavily than to him. He was no ordinary commander, statesman, and patriot. His aim was not merely to win a single battle which should make his own name glorious; but to train up a school of great captains, who, after he should be taken away, might follow in his steps, and seek to emulate his fame: to imbue them, if not with his genius, at all events with his spirit; with the deep love of their country, which animated himself; and with principles for their professional conduct, which might best enable them to render her effectual service. With this view, knowing how apt signals are to be unseen or misunderstood in the heat of battle, evening after evening he assembled his captains on board the Vanguard, and explained to them the different plans which he had formed for attacking the enemy, varying with the different positions in which it was conceivable that he might find them; unfolding to them, it is hardly too much to say, the whole science of naval warfare, as it presented itself to his comprehensive, audacious, yet prudent genius. The advantages of this practice, we are assured by one\* of those who profited by it, were found to be almost incalculable when the day of battle arrived; for, though it was fought

\* See Sir Edward Berry's 'Narrative of the Battle of the Nile,'

by night, when signals could hardly have been visible, his captains were so thoroughly instructed in his intentions that they were able to carry them out with the most minute precision. He took even more care of his youngest officers; looking on himself in an especial degree as their instructor and guardian while afloat under his command. One or two of his midshipmen always breakfasted with him; and while entertaining them at his own table, he put off the great commander, entered into all their boyish jokes, and in manner and feeling seemed as gay-hearted and youthful as any of his party. He showed equal anxiety to promote the amusement of the men. His maxim was that idleness, always mischievous, was nowhere the parent of greater evil than on board ship; but that, so long as the men's minds were occupied, it did not much signify how they were engaged. His first object, of course, was their professional efficiency; to promote which, whenever the weather would permit, he practised them with great diligence in firing, which during this cruise, they consequently improved to a great pitch of rapidity and accuracy: but the moment these exercises were finished, he showed equal eagerness in promoting the pastimes of single-stick, plays, and dancing, by which he kept them not only in spirits, but in such health that, when the day came on which he had need of all their strength, he had not a sick man in his whole fleet.

Still, during his whole cruise, not a fragment of intelligence could he gather concerning the enemy; and when he again came in sight of Sicily, he complained in bitterness of spirit that he knew no more of their course than he had known four weeks before. Were he to die, he declared that "Want of frigates" would be stamped upon his heart. But his resolution and confidence were unabated. He still assured Lord St. Vincent that "if they were above water he would find them out and bring them to battle." On the 20th of July he put into

Syracuse for water and fresh provisions ; and, having obtained them, he quitted that harbour on the 25th, to renew his search. He still believed Egypt or Syria to be the destination of the fleet for which he was looking ; and the line he now laid down for himself was to steer for the mouth of the Archipelago, where he should be sure to learn if, contrary to his expectations, they had gone to Constantinople ; and, if he failed to hear of them there or at Candia, he intended to proceed to Cyprus, Syria, and, as a last resource, to return to Egypt. As he coasted along the Morea, he sent the Culloden into Coron for intelligence ; and Troubridge, when the next day he rejoined him, brought with him a French brig as a prize, and what was far more welcome, certain information that, nearly four weeks before the French fleet had been seen beyond Candia, steering towards the south-east. All his former opinions thus confirmed, Nelson set all sail ; once more bore up directly towards Alexandria, and at midday on the 1st of August he came in sight of the land. The Alexander and the Swiftsure were sent ahead to look out ; but as yet they saw no enemy, though the French tricolour was plainly discerned waving on the walls of the city. The fleet pressed on along shore ; and at last, a little before three in the afternoon, the Zealous signalled that she saw sixteen sail of men-of-war at anchor in a roadstead twenty miles beyond Alexandria, known as Aboukir Bay, and, at its eastern extremity, touching the western mouth of the Nile, where it falls into the sea at Rosetta.

It was the long sought for French fleet.\* As we

\* The following is a list of the two fleets :—

74	Vanguard	..	{ Rear-Ad. Sir H. Nelson.	120	L'Orient.
	Culloden	..	{ Captain Berry.	80	{ Guillaume Tell.
	Theseus ..	..	Captain Troubridge.		{ Franklin.
	Alexander ..	..	Captain Miller.		{ Tonnant.
	Minotaur ..	..	Captain Ball.	74	{ Guerrier.
	Swiftsure ..	..	Captain Louis.		{ Conquérant.
	Audacious ..	..	Captain Hallowell.		{ Spartiate.
	Defence ..	..	Captain Gould.		{ Timoléon.
	Zealous ..	..	Captain Peyton.		{ Souverain Peuple.
			Captain Hood.		{ L'Heureux.

have already seen, on the 19th of May it had quitted Toulon, having escaped the gale to which Nelson so nearly succumbed; on the 9th of June it reached Malta, which the treasonable imbecility of the Knights of St. John, to whom it belonged, surrendered with scarcely an effort at resistance. On the 19th, having stayed long enough to plunder the island, the city of La Valetta, and the principal churches, Brueys proceeded on his way. On the 22nd he narrowly escaped an encounter with Nelson, which, had it taken place while Buonaparte was still on board, might have changed the whole subsequent history of the world; and on the 1st of July he reached Alexandria, and landed the General and his army. It was soon ascertained that the larger ships could not enter the harbour of Alexandria, which had been greatly injured by the neglect of its Turkish masters; and, as Buonaparte, who had the chief authority in this combined expedition, would not allow the fleet to depart, after a careful survey of the coast, Brueys decided on anchoring in Aboukir Bay, which seemed to him, with some reason, to present a sufficiently secure position. Dangerous shoals lay at its western end, and all along the shore; so that the French vessels, anchoring along the line of deep water, occupied a position which he pronounced impossible to be turned. A small island then known as the island of Aboukir, but since that day bearing the name of Nelson, also rose out of the outer shoal, about two miles from the mainland, on which he erected a battery well armed with heavy guns and mortars. And he was the more easily

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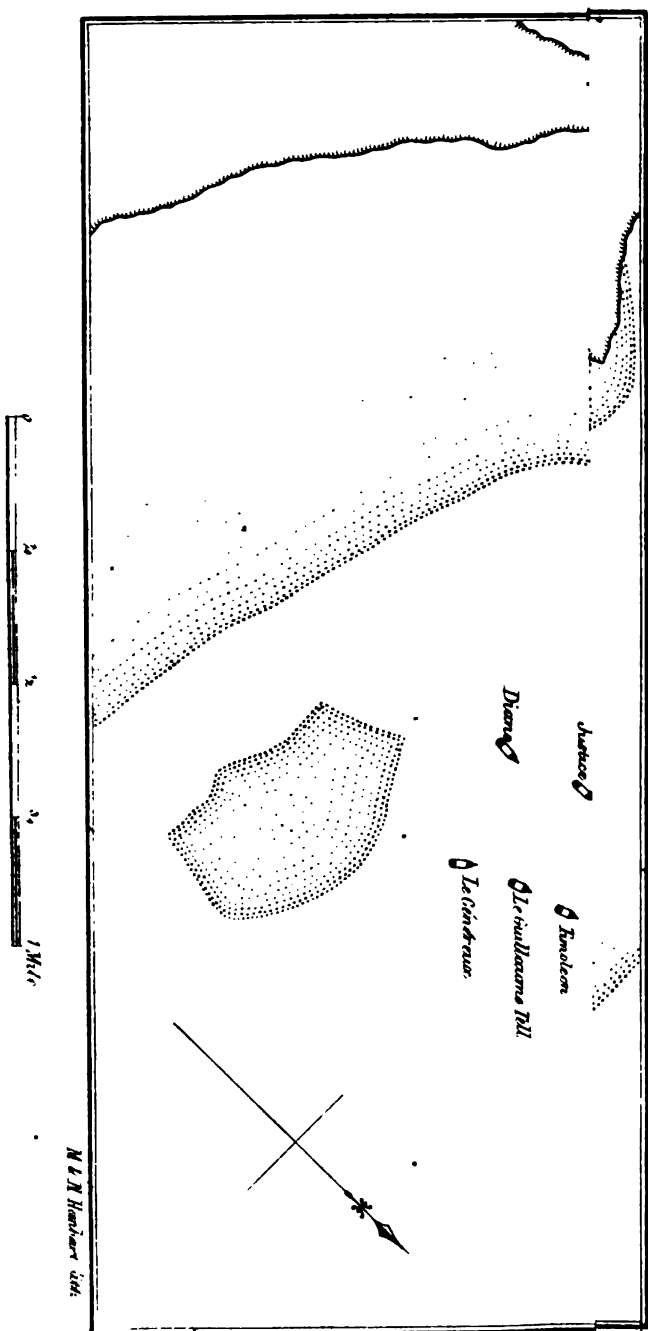
74	{	Orion .. ..	Captain Saumarez.
		Goliath .. ..	Captain Foley.
		Majestic ..	Captain Westcott.
		Bellerophon ..	Captain Darby.
50		Leander .. ..	Captain Thomson.
		La Mutine, brig	Commander Hardy.

74	{	Mercurc.
		L'Aquilon.
		Le Généreux.
Frigates :		
		Diane, 40.
		Justice, 40.
		L'Artémise, 36.
		La Sérieuse, 36.
		La Fortune, brig, 18.

satisfied with his position because he believed in his heart that the English fleet had missed him on purpose; not wishing to find him, because Nelson was aware that he was only equal to him in number.

He was about to be rudely undeceived. Since he had quitted the Morea, Nelson's anxiety had been so intense that he had scarcely quitted the deck of the Vanguard, or allowed himself time for sleep or food; but now he hoisted the signal to prepare for battle, and ordered his dinner. Presently he made the further signal that he intended to attack the van and centre of the enemy as they lay at anchor; this plan of attack having been already fully explained to his captains. The wind was fresh from the N.N.W., bearing him on just as he wished to be borne. He pressed on: and presently approached near enough to discern the exact strength of the French fleet, and the true character of their position. The fleet was more numerous by one ship than the Zealous had at first reported. One 120-gun ship, L'Orient (formerly known as the Sans Culotte, but renamed in honour of this expedition), three of 80 guns, and nine seventy-fours made up the line of battle; while the only small ships which Nelson had with him, the Leander and the Mutine brig, were more than counter-balanced by two 40-gun, and two 36-gun frigates: several gunboats also flanked the enemy's line; and the whole presented a most formidable superiority of force to that of our fleet, which consisted wholly of seventy-fours. Calculations of that kind, however, were the only ones which never entered Nelson's mind. Still he pressed on; and as he drew nearer, and scanned the enemy's line with a scrutinizing eye, he perceived that their ships were moored at a distance from each other of about twice their own length. It instantly struck him that wherever there was room for a French ship to swing, there must be room for one of ours to anchor; and he now, as he advanced, modified his original plan of

*Plan of the Battle of the Nile. 18<sup>th</sup> August 1798.*







attack in accordance with that idea. He had previously adopted a suggestion made by Foley of the *Goliath*, that, if it were found practicable, it might be advantageous to pass between the French and the shore, since the guns on the landward side of the enemy's ships were likely to be less ready for action than the others. As far back as the 8th of June, the very day after the main body of the fleet joined him, he had issued a general order, in anticipation of having to attack the enemy at their anchorage, recommending each line-of-battle ship to prepare to anchor by the stern with a spring on the cable. And this day his first signal to prepare for battle had been accompanied by another to be prepared to anchor by the stern. As they came to close quarters with the enemy, the *Goliath* and the *Zealous* led the way; and since the existence of shoals at the entrance of the bay was known, though not their exact position, each ship sounded as she moved on; the *Zealous* more especially, by Nelson's direction, Hood himself watching the lead, to pilot the fleet in safety round the shore.

Brueys had sent out a small brig in advance of his line, with orders to approach the British fleet, and then to retreat across a shoal, near the entrance of the bay, in the hope of luring them to destruction in their pursuit of her; but our captains disdained so ignoble an antagonist when such a prize as a whole fleet lay before them, and the French Admiral's ingenuity was wasted. Nelson, that he might the better see what was going on, allowed two or three more of his ships to pass ahead of the *Vanguard*, so that her place by this arrangement was nearly in the centre of his line as it advanced. The *Goliath* was first in action, then came the *Zealous*, the *Orion*, the *Audacious*, and the *Theseus*, each receiving a heavy fire from the van of the enemy, and also from the battery on the island, but moving on regardless of such interruption to their appointed places. A frigate, too, *La Sérieuse*, 36, ven-

tured to place herself in the way of the Orion as she advanced, and wounded two of her men. The line-of-battle ship did not condescend to notice the attack ; but taking a wider sweep as she passed outside the Zealous, ran against the frigate, and the collision reduced her to a complete wreck, dismasting her and driving her on a shoal, where she filled with water, and the greater part of her crew deserted her. Five of our ships were now engaged, all anchored between the French and the land, some broadside to broadside with their antagonist, and some between two, on the quarter of one French ship and the bow of another ; while Nelson who came next in the Vanguard, by a sudden inspiration altered his plans, and, instead of following the others, led the rest of his fleet outside the French, and thus placed all their leading ships between two fires. The Defence, Minotaur, Bellerophon and Majestic followed in succession, and all was proceeding well when a sad misfortune befell the ship that was next in order. As it was now very dark, for the first gun was not fired till half-past six, Troubridge came on, sounding as carefully as if no ship had gone before to guide him ; but the water shoaled more rapidly than he suspected, and, though but a moment before he was in eleven fathoms water, suddenly he found himself aground on the edge of the shoal, from which no exertion of his well-trying crew could disengage him. With admirable promptitude he made signals to the two ships in his rear, the Swiftsure and the Alexander, to notify his misfortune to them ; and they, profiting by the timely warning, cleared the shoal and hastened forward to take their part in the battle, which had by this time lasted nearly an hour, and was becoming unprecedently fierce, but was already turning in our favour. The little Leander too, whose commander, Captain Thompson, had obtained permission from Nelson to take a place in his line, with equal good fortune rounded the Culloden, and took up her position with such

judgment that, while she was comparatively safe herself, her shot, if they missed one of the enemy's ships, could hardly fail to reach another.

As the *Swiftsure* made her way into the battle she encountered another danger. She almost ran aboard the *Bellerophon*, without being able to distinguish whether she was a friend or an enemy. Nelson had ordered all his fleet to hoist four lights horizontally at the mizen-peak ; but the *Bellerophon* being now dismasted was no longer in a condition to obey the order. She had intended to place herself on the outer bow of the flagship *L'Orient*, but her anchor failed to bring her up at the right moment and consequently she came abreast of, and was nearly overpowered by that huge three-decker ; in a very short time she had lost all her masts, and had more than once been set on fire ; and when, in addition to these disasters, one-third of her crew had fallen, Darby, her captain, at last yielded to the necessity of withdrawing her. As she dropped down past the *Swiftsure* the crew of the latter were preparing to fire into her and complete her destruction, had not Hallowell checked them till he could hail her. He soon learnt who she was, and, thankful for having been spared an error which would have embittered the whole victory, he hastened on, and by a mixture of skill and good fortune anchored almost in the spot which the *Bellerophon* had left vacant.

It was now pitch dark, if that could be called darkness which was lit up each moment with the flashes from above a thousand guns ; but soon the cannonade began to slacken at the head of the French line, as ship after ship struck to her assailant. The *Conquérant*, occupying the second place in the line, was the first to yield. The *Goliath* was almost abreast of her ; the *Theseus* fired upon her quarter ; the *Audacious* raked her bows : beneath such a combined attack, her masts soon went overboard, and she struck. The *Guerrier*, the foremost ship of all, soon followed,

surrendering to the Zealous, who had taken up a position on her larboard bow, by which she was enabled to rake her almost without receiving the slightest return. Neither, however, did she submit till all her masts were gone; and, as she had no longer a stump left from which a colour could be hauled down, Hood sent his first-lieutenant on board to hoist a light up and then lower it, in token that she was his prize. She had lost nearly four hundred men, while the Zealous had but seven men wounded. The Vanguard had brought up alongside the Spartiate; all the French ships fought bravely, and none with greater gallantry than this which thus became the opponent of Nelson himself. She had a gallant supporter in L'Aquilon, who lay in a position which enabled her for a time to rake the British flagship with severe effect; and one of the two had very nearly dealt a blow which would have counter-balanced the victory, if it was too late to turn it to their own side. The battle had lasted almost two hours, and Nelson on his quarter-deck was looking over a rough sketch of the Bay of Aboukir which had been found in a prize that the Swiftsure had taken a day or two before, when a piece of langridge-shot struck him on the forehead, cutting to the very bone; and, as the lacerated flesh dropped over his remaining eye, the sudden darkness and the intense pain of the wound impressed him at once with the belief that it was mortal. Berry caught him as he was falling. "I am killed!" said he, "remember me to my wife." He was carried down to the cockpit, and the surgeon at once left the wounded man whom he had under his hands to examine him. "No," said Nelson; even in this moment of agony showing that tender anxiety for his men that so endeared him to them and to the whole nation. "I will take my turn with my brave fellows." When his turn came, it was at once discovered that the hurt, though painful in the extreme, was not dangerous. It was bound up, and soon he was again on deck. Meantime the

Spartiate, totally dismasted, had struck to the Vanguard, L'Aquilon to the Minotaur, and, even of those French ships that had not yet surrendered, more than one was entirely disabled, when an event took place which, though not without example in more than one subsequent battle, yet happening, as on this occasion it did, to the flagship, and that a vessel so far exceeding the rest of the two fleets in size, made an unwonted impression on the combatants on both sides. A few minutes after nine, L'Orient was seen to be on fire; her Admiral had been killed some time before, and she had been dismasted and totally disabled by the successive attacks of the Bellerophon and Swiftsure. There seems, indeed, little doubt that she had struck, but we had not yet taken possession of her, when flames were seen rising up from her poop-deck. The cause was never positively ascertained; but the most probable account given of the origin of the disaster is that some of the combustibles, with which every French ship was provided, had been set on fire by our shot. In a short time the whole hull of the mighty ship was enveloped in flames. The intelligence reached Nelson, still writhing under the surgeon's hands, and he at once hastened on deck to give orders for boats to be sent out to rescue the crew from the horrid fate which threatened them. Little, however, could be done in that way: the flames burnt too fiercely to allow our rowers to approach near enough to be of much service. They did indeed save about seventy men; the remainder perished either in the waves into which they had plunged, or in the explosion which at last destroyed the ship. At about ten o'clock, in something less than an hour from the time when the flames were first discovered, the mighty vessel blew up, producing an effect to which nothing similar is recorded in the history of war. Livy relates that while the battle of Thrasymene was at its height an earthquake shook the ground on which the combatants were standing without either Roman or Carthaginian being aware of what

had taken place. This vast explosion produced upon the inanimate things around an effect but little inferior to that of an earthquake. The sea heaved violently, the waves rose high upon the shores, the batteries and towers around quivered with the concussion ; but the living beings who witnessed it showed no such insensibility as the soldiers of Hannibal or Flaminius. They were awestricken. For some minutes\* neither side fired a gun ; the conquerors resting from their work of destruction, the conquered too much dispirited to retaliate or resist ; and the sudden total silence which ensued seemed as awful as the catastrophe which had caused it. But presently both sides were roused by it to fresh exertions, as the burning spars and the prepared combustibles, which the explosion scattered far and wide around, threatened more than one of the combatants in either fleet with a similar fate. Of our ships the *Alexander*, *Swiftsure*, and *Orion* were the most endangered, but their captains had taken such precautions that the blazing fragments that showered down upon them were speedily extinguished. The crew of the French *Franklin* had been less provident, their ship was set on fire by the pieces of the burning timber and cordage which fell upon her deck ; and for some time their exertions, which would have been fully taxed to make head against the British, were necessarily devoted to the task of defending themselves against a still more formidable enemy. Even under this fearful disadvantage, they, like all their comrades on this eventful day, fought their ship most gallantly. The *Defence* and *Swiftsure* were pouring their fire into her starboard bow and quarter, on the other side the *Orion*, almost abreast of

\* Sir E. Berry, who was in the battle, says, "three minutes ;" the French Admiral Blanquet says "a quarter of an hour." And this officer represents the explosion as taking place three quarters of an hour later than is stated in Sir E. Berry's narrative or in the *Vanguard's* log. The biographer of Sir J. Saumarez, without giving his authority, carries it three quarters of an hour later still, and fixes it at half-past eleven;

her, was equally vigorous ; yet it was not till two of her masts had gone overboard, and more than half her crew had fallen, that she lowered her colours to a combined force that she might be pardoned for finding irresistible.

By midnight almost every French ship that had been attacked was in our hands ; two, the *Heureux* and *Mercure* having quitted their line, and got aground a short distance from the main battle, were not taken till the next morning, when Nelson sent some ships against them, who speedily compelled them and the 36-gun frigate *L'Artemise* to surrender. The crew of the *Artemise*, after hauling down their colours, set fire to their ship and abandoned her ; but fortunately Lieut. Hoste, whom Captain Miller had sent to take possession of her, perceived what had been done before he reached her ; and turning back before she blew up, escaped the fate in which the defeated Frenchmen had so dishonourably sought to involve him. Two more, the *Tonnant* and the *Timoléon* postponed their fate till the next day. The *Tonnant*, whose original position had been next astern of *L'Orient*, having slipped her cable to avoid the effects of the anticipated explosion, had drifted to leeward, to a distance from any antagonist, and, though mastless, and perfectly unmanageable, did not formally surrender till the *Leander* came down to her on the morning of the 3rd.

Three of the French line-of-battle, the *Guillaume Tell*, 80, the flagship of Rear-Admiral Villeneuve, a brave and skilful officer reserved by destiny to grace a later triumph of our arms, the *Généreux*, 74, and the *Timoléon*, 74, having been in the rear of the French line, had not been reached by any of our vessels in the night of the 1st ; on the morning of the 2nd, when few of our ships remained in a condition for active service, and those few were engaged either, as has been mentioned, in capturing the *Heureux* and *Mercure*, or in assisting the *Bellerophon*, they, accompanied by two frigates, *La Justice* and *La*



Diane, began to make sail out of the bay. The *Theseus*, though unsupported, had for some time been firing upon the whole group, who were too much disheartened to reply: and now, as they passed, her continued fire drove the *Timoléon* on shore; where her crew set fire to her and abandoned her. Her companions proceeded on their way. The *Zealous*, which, though she had contributed her full share to the victory, had received but little damage, quitted the *Bellerophon* to pursue them single-handed; she even got within musket-shot of them, but they were too eager to escape to stop to engage her, and contented themselves with aiming a well-directed and effective fire at her rigging; and after a short time, Nelson, though highly admiring Hood's skill and gallantry, yet, having no ship to send to his support, recalled him; and with his return to the fleet the battle ended.

It was the greatest victory that as yet the British Navy had ever gained. Though the number of the ships engaged on each side had been nearly equal, the greatly superior size of some of the French ships, and their consequently far heavier weight of metal, gave them an advantage which, in their own opinion was enormously enhanced by the strength of their position. Brueys himself had believed that position to be nearly impregnable, and an attack upon it by night he had considered wholly impracticable. It is possible that he was confirmed in this belief by the annals of both navies, for his fleet, as it lay at anchor, presented a front not very unlike that of the British fleet at *Sainte Lucie* in 1778, when, as has been related in a preceding chapter,\* Admiral Barrington more than once beat off a greatly superior force under the Count D'Estaing: and, as no French ships had been concerned in the battles of *St. Vincent* and *Camperdown*, it may be said that no action that had as yet taken place in the present war had shown any great difference be-

\* Vol. i., p. 341.

tween the enterprise of English and French Admirals, when opposed to one another. From the battle of the Nile a new era begins: of the thirteen French line-of-battle ships two only had escaped; of the remaining eleven, two were destroyed, and nine now bore the English flag. Of the frigates also two had been sunk; the batteries likewise on the isle of Aboukir were taken, and their guns were removed on board our fleet; and, in spite of the eminent gallantry and resolution which every one of the hostile ships engaged had displayed, so great had been the skill of our Admiral and his unrivalled band of captains, that this great triumph had been gained with a comparatively trifling sacrifice of life: our entire loss in killed and wounded did not amount to nine hundred men; a smaller number than that which had perished in L'Orient alone. Of our ships, too, though the Belerophon was wholly, the Majestic partially dismasted, one or two others having also lost topmasts or topgallantmasts, and though the Vanguard, Theseus and Swiftsure had received many heavy shot in their hulls and some even below the water-line, yet not one was disabled for future service: while some of the prizes were so damaged that Nelson found it necessary to destroy them.\*

Nelson's conduct after the battle was as admirable as the energy and genius which he had displayed before and in it, and equally characteristic of that deep sense of duty which influenced every action of his public life. While all around him were full of exultation at the unparalleled greatness of their triumph, and of admiration and praise of him to whose genius they owed it, his first care was to teach them to give the honour where it was due; and even before he sat down to write the despatch which was to convey the news of the victory to his

\* See the Appendix for the Despatch of Admiral Ganteaume, the French Commander-in-chief after the death of Admiral Brueys. The original is in the British Museum,

countrymen at home, he penned a brief order, announcing to the fleet his intention of returning "Public Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the victory with which He had blessed His Majesty's arms," on board the Vanguard at two o'clock that day, and recommending the rest of his ships to follow his example. It is said that the French at Rosetta, when on that afternoon they beheld the sudden cessation of activity on board the British ships, and learnt its cause, were more forcibly impressed by the devout spirit which thus felt the victory, than they had been by the heroism which had gained it; and remarked that it was not to be wondered at that men should conquer, who, in such a moment of excitement, could trace and acknowledge its origin with such calm humility.

The next day Nelson sent off two sets of despatches; commissioning Captain Berry to proceed in the Leander to convey one to Lord St. Vincent,\* and with a sort of prophetic foresight that some mishap might overtake the Leander, entrusting the other to Captain Capel in the Mutine, to bear to the Admiralty in England. Had it not been for this precaution, England would have waited almost to the end of the year for intelligence of her success; for, on the 18th of August, before she had quite got clear of the coast of Candia, the Leander perceived a ship far larger than herself coming towards her, which was soon made out to be the *Généreux*, 74, one of the two line-of-battle ships that had escaped from Aboukir † on the 2nd. Captain Thompson had many of his crew absent on board of some of the prizes, and in no case could possibly have been a match for such a ship as a French seventy-four; nevertheless he remembered his exploits in the late battle, when no ship in the fleet had borne herself

\* On sending Berry to Cadiz, Nelson promoted Captain Hardy from the Mutine to the Vanguard; and made Capel, previously signal-lieutenant of the Vanguard, commander of the Mutine.

† James shows that the weight of the Leander's broadside was 432 lbs., of the *Généreux* 1024 lbs.

more intrepidly, nor, for her size, had been of greater service, and prepared to do his best against his formidable antagonist. At nine in the morning the action began. The way in which each ship was manned added greatly to the superiority possessed by the French, since, while the *Leander* was short-handed, the *Généreux*, having on board a number of sailors who had escaped from the *Timoléon*, had upwards of nine hundred men. Relying on this preponderance of numbers, after a time she came down upon the *Leander* and made repeated attempts to board her : but the English marines, who were stationed on the poop of their ship, kept up a fire of musketry so vigorous as to defeat every attempt of that kind. The superior weight of the fire of the *Généreux*, however, began gradually to tell. The *Leander* lost her mizenmast and her foretopmast, and the wreck, hanging over the side, masked and so disabled many of her guns. Still, so admirably was the little 50-gun ship fought and handled that she more than once poured most effective broadsides into the Frenchman, hoping against hope that some chance shot might disable her. But it was not to be : soon the *Leander* lost her mainmast too, and as the *Généreux* had sustained no such disaster, she was able to move round her, and take up a position in which she might rake her without reply. After a gallant resistance of nearly seven hours, the *Leander* was compelled to strike. She had lost upwards of ninety men, nearly one-third of her crew ; but the loss which she had inflicted on her captor more than trebled that ; and, indeed, exceeded the entire number of men on board the *Leander*. No more glorious defence against an overwhelming superiority of force was ever maintained. One would like to be able to record that the victorious French paid deserved honours to a crew so gallant, though unfortunate. But it is painful to be forced to add that by their conduct to the vanquished they showed themselves wholly unworthy of the advantage

which Fortune had thus thrown into their hands: they not only plundered the British officers of all their private property, and of their very clothes, but even robbed the surgeon of his instruments which he was preparing for his attendance on the wounded men; and refused to allow that officer to visit Captain Thompson at all, though he had been severely wounded, and had a musket-ball in his arm, which, consequently, he could not get extracted till he arrived at Corfu a fortnight afterwards. The name of the French captain who thus disgraced his flag was Lejoille; and though the armies and fleets of the Republic produced but too many officers who disregarded all the rules of civilized warfare, and contradicted the proverb that "Bravery and humanity are inseparable," yet the brutality displayed by Captain Lejoille gives him an odious pre-eminence even among such men, and makes it the duty of every writer, of every country, who has occasion to relate his conduct, to hold his memory up to the detestation it deserves.

Nelson spoke truly when he said that victory was a word hardly strong enough for the blow dealt to the enemy at the Nile: it ought, he said, to be called a conquest. He believed that, had it not been for his own wound, not one French ship would have escaped;\* and

\* We quote his own words, that it may be seen that this assertion was not meant to throw blame on any one: "I regret that one escaped, and I think, if it had pleased God that I had not been wounded, not a boat would have escaped to have told the tale; but do not believe that any individual in the fleet was to blame. In my conscience I believe greater exertions could not have been, and I only mean to say, that if my experience could (in person) have directed those exertions of individuals, there was every appearance that Almighty God would have continued to bless my endeavours for the honour of our King, the advantage of our country, and for the peace and happiness (I hope) of all Europe."—Letter to Lord Minto, *Desp.* iii., 110. To Lord Howe he states his belief more strongly, but still with the same praise of his officer: "Had it pleased God that I had not been wounded and stone-blind, there cannot be a doubt but that every ship would have been in our possession. But here let it not be supposed that any officer is to blame. No; on my honour, I am satisfied each did his very best."—*Ib.*, p. 280. In

more bitterly still did he lament the disaster of the Culloden, whose presence, to take her expected share in the battle, would certainly have secured the capture of all. And if the victory was unequalled in its completeness, it was so likewise in its political effects. It re-armed Europe against France: Buonaparte's army seemed hopelessly cut off in Syria; and Austria, broken by his campaign of the preceding year, now trusted that she saw a prospect of regaining the advantages which she had lost by the treaty of Campo Formio, and renewed the war against the Directory. Russia also concluded an alliance with us, and bound herself to co-operate with our armies; and even such governments as those of Naples and Constantinople derived courage from the great blow thus dealt to the universal enemy, and prepared to join their forces to those of the conquerors. That the hopes thus engendered proved abortive, and that the exertions thus inspired ultimately tended to the injury of those who made them, was not the fault of the British fleet or of its great Admiral. Indeed, had Nelson been furnished with a force sufficient to watch the Egyptian coast and the French harbours, for which he and Lord St. Vincent were ever imploring the Admiralty, and imploring in vain,\* it is probable that those hopes would have been realised: Buonaparte would have been unable to effect his return to France, and till he did so the French armies and generals were wholly overmatched, not only by the superior numbers, but by the superior skill of the allies. As things turned out, it was in India, perhaps, that the most beneficial effect was produced by the great battle. Nelson, who

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fact, Nelson's language was invariably directed to the object of giving the credit of the victory to his captains: "My band of friends was irresistible."

—Ib. 109. "The band of brothers; each as I may have occasion to mention them, must call forth my gratitude and admiration."

\* See Letter of Lord St. Vincent to Lord Spencer, in *Brenton's 'Life of Earl St. Vincent,'* i. 481.

from the first had suspected Buonaparte of a secret understanding with Sultan Tippoo, with great judgment sent off an express at once to Lord Mornington, then Governor-General, with the intelligence; and Tippoo, roused to despair and rage by thus learning that he had no help to expect from Europe, began to marshal his own forces, and thus to betray a hostility towards us which he was in no condition to carry out, and which only led to his immediate overthrow and destruction.

The exultation at home, as was natural, kept pace with that felt on the Continent. In England,\* indeed, men had felt no anxiety as to the result of the meeting of the two fleets; they had felt that all that was wanted was that they should meet, and were quite contented to trust Nelson for the consequences; yet even Englishmen had not anticipated so glorious and decisive a triumph; and when the rewards to be given for it were announced, the universal voice of the nation declared them to be inadequate. The fleet for itself had no reason to complain; gold medals were given to all the captains; the first-lieutenants were promoted, and, for once departing from precedent, the Government even granted to the sailors a sum of money as payment for the prizes which Nelson had judged it better to destroy than to repair: but the honours conferred upon the Admiral himself fell far short of those which had been granted to other officers for far inferior achievements. For St. Vincent, the conqueror had been raised from a barony to an earldom; for Camperdown, Duncan had been made a Viscount: Nelson, on the insufficient pretext† that he was under another as Commander-in-chief,

\* See a letter of Pitt's, date July 25, 1798, quoted by Lord Stanhope, 'Life of Pitt,' iii. 144.

† This argument probably came from the king. Pitt's original intention was to make Nelson a Viscount, as he announced to Lord Hood the day after the intelligence of the victory reached England, "but it was objected to in a certain quarter, because he was not Commander-in-chief." — See Lord Hood's Letter to Nelson, Nelson Despatches, iii. 85. Lord Hood, a compe-

was made a baron. And while both those officers received a pension of 1000*l.* a year on the Irish establishment in addition to their English grant, no such vote was proposed in the Irish Parliament on this occasion.\* Other bodies, however, and other countries were more liberal and more just. The East India Company showed their agreement with his belief in the designs of the French on our Asiatic dominions by voting him a grant of 10,000*l.*; the Sultan, the King of Sardinia, the Emperor of Russia, and other princes, loaded him with presents; and the King of Naples subsequently conferred on him the dukedom of Bronte in Sicily, with the domain known by that name, the value of which was estimated at 3000*l.* a year. Nelson would have been more or less than man if he had not felt elated at these honours, and at the universal acknowledgment of his genius and worth which prompted them: but even in the first flush of triumph he was more anxious for his friends than for himself; and above all others for Troubridge, who was almost in despair at the accident that had deprived him of his share in the battle. Nelson affirmed that it had only made his merit more conspicuous, since, as he believed, there was not another man in the service who could have rendered the Culloden again effective in so short a time as he: for the injuries which she had received were very great; the spot on which she struck was the most rocky part of the shoal; the sea in the course of the evening had become very rough, and for seven hours the Culloden was beating in the most

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tent judge of the principle thus laid down, says: "In my humble judgment a more flimsy reason was never given. . . . In fact, your Lordship stood in the situation of Commander-in-chief at the mouth of the Nile; and could not possibly receive advice or assistance at the distance of near 1000 leagues from Earl St. Vincent. . . . I am not singular in the sentiments I have stated; they are in unison with the general voice of your grateful country."

\* Southey has made a curious mistake in attributing the withholding of the Irish Grant to the Union, which did not take place till nearly two years afterwards; and Southey could not have been ignorant that both Houses of the Irish Parliament passed an unanimous vote of thanks to Nelson and his fleet for the victory.



imminent danger of entire destruction. When, at last, by the help of the Mutine, which Nelson had sent to her assistance, she got off the rocks, her rudder was gone, and two or three leaks of such formidable dimensions had been created, that she made seven feet of water an hour. In such emergencies Troubridge's resolution and energy shone with the greatest lustre. The way in which he had repaired the same ship before the battle of St. Vincent has been already mentioned; and now, her almost desperate condition only caused him to exert himself still more strenuously. The crew too, worked as such an example was likely to make them: a sail was thrummed and put under the ship's bottom, a spare topmast was converted into a rudder, and, though the pumps could never be left quite idle, she was one of the first ships that after the battle was reported ready for sea. Nelson's praise was not undeserved, and his efforts in his friend's cause were not unsuccessful. By the King's special command, Troubridge was included in the list of those who received the gold medal; and, though it was decided that his first-lieutenant could not be included among those promoted as having been engaged with the enemy, orders were sent by the Admiralty to Lord St. Vincent to give him the first vacancy that should occur.

It was no slight labour to refit the fleet and its prizes. We had not, indeed, lost many masts; but several of our ships had been hulled most severely: while of the French ships there was scarcely one that had not lost at least one mast, several were wholly dismasted, and all had been greatly damaged in their hulls. Three would have taken so much time to refit, that Nelson burnt them, and ventured to assure the squadron that the Admiralty would pay for them. He reported his promise to Lord Spencer, and argued with such evident reason that "if an Admiral, after a victory, was only to look after the captured ships, and not to distressing the enemy, very dearly would the

nation pay for the prizes," that his views were adopted ; and a precedent was thus set which was certainly founded on the truest wisdom, though there have not been many instances in which there has been occasion to act upon it. The other six prizes were by great skill and industry got ready for sea by the 14th, and Sir James Saumarez was given a squadron of seven sail of the line to escort them to England. Nelson had intended to remain some little time off Alexandria, hoping to obtain some bomb-vessels in order to burn the French store-ships and transports in that harbour, whose destruction was still wanting to make the victory quite complete in his eyes : but on the 15th or 16th he received despatches from Lord St. Vincent, which imperatively called him westward ; and which indeed held him out such a prospect of important enterprise in an attack upon Minorca, which the Ministers at home had suggested, that he sent orders of recall to two of the ships he had sent with Saumarez, the *Minotaur* and the *Audacious* ; and with the *Vanguard*, *Culloden*, and *Alexander*, sailed on the 19th for Naples, leaving Hood in the *Zealous*, with the *Goliath* and *Swiftsure* under his command, and some frigates which had found him since the battle, to cruise off Alexandria, with the object of cutting off all communication between the French army and that city ; and, still more, of intercepting any supplies which might be on their way from France.

On the 22nd of September "the poor wretched *Vanguard*," "the wreck of *Vanguard*," as her Admiral called her, reached Naples. She might well be spoken of in terms of compassion : ever since the gale of May she had been sailing under jury masts ; she had, as has been mentioned, been greatly injured in the battle ; and he himself was not in much better condition than his ship ; his wound in the head caused him the most severe and constant suffering, it had brought on a fever while the fleet was

refitting, which had caused the surgeons for some hours to despair of his recovery, and he was reduced to such a state of weakness that he thought his life must be nearly at an end. He wrote to Lord St. Vincent that he never expected to see his face again : yet when he reached Italy, and found how much there was to be done, the very demands which were made upon his strength, if they could not give him strength, at least gave him resolution ; he renounced the intention which he had expressed of going home, and at once began to apply himself to eking out the inadequacy of his force by the universality of his own energy and vigilance. The duties imposed upon him and his squadron at this time, were sufficient to task the powers of a strong man and of a large fleet. He was expected to protect the coasts of Italy and Sicily ; to blockade Malta ; to prevent any communication between France and the French army in Egypt ; to co-operate with the Turkish and Russian fleets which, as his instructions informed him, were soon to be expected in the Archipelago, and with the Austrian and Italian armies, in case the events of the war should lead to a renewal of military operations in Italy ; and, in a short time, the protection of Minorca also was demanded of him ; while, for the performance of these multifarious and often conflicting duties, the force with which he was furnished never exceeded ten sail of the line, all nearly worn out with the long cruise and the severe conflicts to which they had been exposed, and three or four frigates, the only vessels available to collect or convey intelligence between Gibraltar and Acre, Venice and Constantinople.

Nelson's first object was to blockade Malta. On his way to Gibraltar, Saumarez had been joined by a Portuguese squadron under the Marquis de Niza, which had been sent from Lisbon to co-operate with our Mediterranean fleet ; and, having been forced by want of a favorable breeze to anchor off that Island, he had learnt that the French garri-

son was in great distress, and that the natives and inhabitants, greatly encouraged by the destruction of the French fleet at the Nile, were eager to rise and expel them, should opportunity offer. Saumarez supplied the citizens with arms and ammunition, and summoned the French to capitulate : his summons met with a disdainful reply, and he could not stay to enforce it ; but he left the Portuguese Commander to watch the harbour of La Valetta, and Nelson, as soon as he arrived at Naples, where the king placed his fleet also, such as it was, under his command, sent Ball with three sail of the line to give additional effect to the blockade. He was the more anxious to make it effective, because there were lying in the port the *Guillaume Tell* and the two frigates which had escaped from the Nile : and his hopes of a successful issue to the siege were increased when, on his own arrival at the end of October, the little island of Gozo, also occupied by a French garrison, did surrender ; and the British squadron thus acquired not only a very considerable supply of food and ammunition, but also a position which greatly facilitated the maintenance of the blockade of the larger island in bad weather.

He was soon recalled to Naples, for the French armies were overrunning Italy with a rapidity that the Neapolitan forces could not have checked, even if they would, and he apprehended that the personal safety of the Royal family might eventually depend on his presence to protect them. In the middle of December the French General Championnet drove Mack, an Austrian officer to whom the command of the Italian army was entrusted, out of Rome, and advanced so rapidly towards Naples, that King Ferdinand resolved to evacuate that city and to retire to Palermo ; and, being unwilling to trust his own officers, he embarked on board the *Vanguard*, and was conveyed by Nelson in safety to his Sicilian capital. Yet while he was performing all these difficult and great services, the blunders of Lord Spencer at the Admiralty, who knew

but little of the rules and etiquette of the profession over which he presided, and but little also of his own mind, and who was very deficient in the art of expressing with clearness even the intentions which he had adopted, had nearly led both Nelson and Lord St. Vincent to resign their commands. The officers whom Nelson had left off the mouths of the Nile were meeting with great success. The *Alcmène* frigate captured a French gunboat carrying despatches to Buonaparte, a feat which would not be worth relating, were it not for the promptitude and gallantry displayed by two of the common sailors of the frigate, John Taylor and James Harding, who, perceiving that the Captain of the gunboat had thrown the despatches overboard, sprang into the sea while the *Alcmène* was going at fair speed, and at the risk of their lives saved the packet, whose contents proved of great importance and value.\* Every ship of Hood's squadron did good service: the force which they were blockading was greatly superior to their own, consisting, as it did, of two 64-gun ships, and eight large frigates, besides a host of corvettes, gunboats, and smaller vessels; and the English captains showed that, while these larger vessels did not dare to come forth to measure themselves with them, the smallest were not safe. What the ships themselves could not reach to attack, their boats cut out; and Hallowell in the *Swiftsure*, on one occasion, stood so close in shore that he was able with his shells to set fire to a camp which the French had intrenched to the south of Aboukir Bay, near lake Madieh.

And all these exploits were performed solely by the British ships; for though some Russian and Turkish vessels did, in pursuance of the engagements into which their Governments had recently entered, show themselves for a few weeks in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, they

\* As there appeared to be no national fund from which these brave men could be adequately rewarded, the City of London came forward, and gave them each a life-pension of 20*l*.

took no part in any of the operations carried on, never fired a single gun, and, at the close of the autumn, returned to their own ports. Yet, while every circumstance was thus showing to the greatest advantage the foresight of Nelson's arrangements, and his judgment in the selection of fit men to carry them out, Lord Spencer's loose manner of giving instructions to other officers led him and Lord St. Vincent to believe themselves superseded in the most important portion of their command by one who, though of distinguished professional merit, was of inferior rank in the service.

After a long captivity in the Temple, at Paris, Sir Sidney Smith had escaped in the May of this year, in a manner which fully displayed his fertility of resource and presence of mind. On reaching England he instantly applied for employment; and the Admiralty, recognising his talents and acknowledging the claims which the hardships he had undergone had given him, at once appointed him to the *Tigre*, a fine 80-gun ship, and sent him to the Mediterranean. He had formerly resided for some time at Constantinople, and his brother, Mr. Spencer Smith, was at this time our Minister at that city, so that the Government conceived him particularly qualified to deal with the Ministers and co-operate with the forces of the Porte, and joined his name with that of his brother in a commission, in a manner which appeared to indicate an intention to render him independent of Nelson, and, in all but mere form, independent of Lord St. Vincent also. Sir Sidney himself entertained this view of his position, and expressed it with the arrogance and presumption which was a part of his character, and which almost inevitably led others to undervalue his very considerable talents. No greater proof of his pretentious assumption need be given than that he actually took upon himself to hoist a broad pendant as Commodore, without having received the slightest authority to do so from any one.

Nelson was so wounded by the slight which he conceived to be put upon him by the appointment, that he applied to Lord St. Vincent and to Lord Spencer for leave to resign his command: and, apart from all other considerations, the condition of his health was such as to render his return to England for rest desirable, and almost necessary; but the state of affairs in every part of the Mediterranean was so critical that he could not be spared; and fortunately Lord Spencer's orders to Sir Sidney were so contrary to all the rules of the service, that Lord St. Vincent had no difficulty in disregarding them, and in commanding Sir Sidney to put himself under Nelson's orders. In communicating this injunction to Nelson, he added that he trusted to his magnanimity to mortify Sir Sidney as little as possible: and Nelson, the moment that the rules of the service were vindicated, showed that personal feeling had no share in dictating his past language on the subject, but at once withdrew Hood from Alexandria, and entrusted the blockade of that port to Sir Sidney. And though he had subsequently more than once occasion to complain of the arrogant tone which that officer employed towards him, no man did more frank justice to the talents which he displayed, and the great services which he performed in his glorious defence of Acre.

Nelson's were not the only triumphs that graced our navy this year in the Mediterranean. In the course of the summer, Lord St. Vincent received more than one small reinforcement; and, as there appeared no likelihood of the Spanish fleet in Cadiz giving him the chance of a second encounter, he decided on at once obeying a suggestion which he had received from home, and on detaching a squadron to co-operate with a land-force in the reduction of Minorca, the possession of which had been so frequent a subject of contention between us and the Spaniards; which, as we have already mentioned, had been restored by us to Spain at the peace of 1783, and

was now, according to the intelligence received by our Ministers, insufficiently garrisoned. In this point they were mistaken, for the Spanish troops on the island amounted to nearly 4000 men : a number quite adequate to its defence, and superior to that which was given to General C. Stuart, who commanded our own troops employed in its reduction ; but they were not deceived in trusting to our officers to overcome any resistance with which they might meet. The ships detached on this service consisted of three line-of-battle ships, three frigates, and several smaller vessels ; and they were placed under the command of Commodore Duckworth, of the *Leviathan*. The transports, protected by two of the frigates, landed the troops on the south-western side of the island ; while the other ships hovered about, some showing themselves off Fornelle and others off Port Mahon so as to distract the garrisons, who could hardly decide what was designed to be the real point of attack. The ships themselves had no opportunity of taking a more active part in the operations. On one occasion Duckworth did indeed, with a part of his squadron, pursue four Spanish frigates, which were at first reported to be line-of-battle ships ; but they outsailed him and escaped ; and the fleet's share of the credit due to the success of the operation was earned by a naval brigade which was detached from their ships to serve on shore ; and which, while performing the same kind of service of which Nelson had set the example at Corsica four years before, gained the marked and cordial praise of General Stuart, who warmly acknowledged the great assistance he had received from their exertions. In eight days after the appearance of our force on its shores, the island capitulated. Great quantities of military and naval stores of every description were found in its magazines. And the whole of this important, if not brilliant, success was obtained without the loss of a single man.



One or two actions between single ships, which took place this year, were recorded in the preceding chapter ; but many others were also fought, in every quarter of the globe, and nearly all of them ended to the advantage of our sailors. Two are entitled to mention, not so much on account of the brilliancy or importance of the achievement, as from the singularity of some of the accompanying circumstances. The little packet *Princess Royal*, Captain Skinner, with only six small guns and thirty-two men, on her way from Falmouth to New York, beat off the French privateer *Aventurier*, with sixteen guns and eighty-five men. The French vessel was so severely damaged that she was compelled to return into port to refit, while the British ship had not a man hurt ; yet the issue might not have been finally in her favour had she not been able to command the services of two passengers, such as are not often available in an hour of battle. Her cartridges were all used, and she could not well spare men to make fresh ones. But Captain Skinner had on board his sister and her maid ; and the two brave women undertook the task, and, undismayed by the *Aventurier's* shot, which were crashing around them, worked away, supplying their defenders with fresh ammunition as fast as it was required, and thus enabling them to bestow their undivided attention on the enemy. Another action, in which the *Seine*, 40, under the temporary command of Lieutenant Bigot, was captured by the *Pique*, 36, Captain David Milne, with the assistance, towards the end of the conflict, of Captain Stirling of the *Jason*, 38, near the port of L'Orient, is remarkable from the singular circumstance of both the British frigates running aground ; the *Pique* being fixed there so firmly that all attempts to get her off failed, and it was found necessary to destroy her. It is remarkable also from the almost equally singular fact of the French on this occasion paying proper respect to courage and skill, even when unsuccessful ; as, instead of

acting in the spirit of the edict which threatened the commander of every captured vessel with death, they promoted Lieutenant Bigot, when by exchange he recovered his freedom, as a just reward for the gallant resistance he had made to superior numbers.

Their own harbours were but little more safe for our enemies than the open sea. In every quarter of the globe our ships sent in boats, and cut out vessels which they could not approach sufficiently near to attack with their guns. At Cerigo, the celebrated Island of Venus at the foot of the Morea, the boats of the *Flora*, Captain Middleton, thus possessed themselves of a splendid corvette. In Aguada Bay, in the island of Porto Rico, in spite of the heavy fire of some powerful batteries, the boats of the *Regulus*, Captain Eyre, brought off three fine vessels laden with valuable cargoes. While a still bolder exploit was witnessed in the eastern seas, where Captain Cooke of the *Sibylle*, 38, and Captain Pulteney Malcolm of the *Fox*, 32, believing that two galleons freighted with rich cargoes were lying at Manilla, on the point of putting to sea, while none of the other ships there were ready for service, hoisted French colours, and stood in to the harbour. They found their information correct, that the greater part of the Spanish vessels were dismantled; but they also found themselves baulked of the booty they had expected, since of the galleons one was aground, and the other had unloaded her treasure on the report of an English ship of war having been seen in the neighbourhood. They did not, however, entirely lose their pains; their nationality was so wholly unsuspected that several of the principal officers of the port came on board to offer supplies, and gather news. They were detained with their boats' crews; and some parties of our sailors were disguised in their clothes, and sent further in in the ships' boats to capture some gunboats which were seen at the mouth of the river. The surprise succeeded perfectly;

no fewer than seven gunboats, with two hundred men and a vast store of arms and ammunition, were brought off, without a loss on our part of a single man. The prisoners, however, were released; and the two frigates hauled out of the bay with their prizes, leaving the Spaniards equally astonished at the audacity of their enterprise, and at the generous humanity which they had displayed to those whom they had thus got into their power.

Other successes were achieved by pure hard fighting, and among them must be especially mentioned an exploit of great gallantry performed by the 14-gun sloop *Espoir*, Commander Otway Bland, who captured a Genoese pirate, named the *Liguria*, of at least three times her force. The guns of the *Espoir* were only six-pounders, while of the armament of the *Liguria*, some were twelve-pounders, twelve were long eighteen-pounders, and of guns of one calibre and another she mounted no fewer than forty-two. Her crew also, composed of desperadoes of all nations, greatly outnumbered the British seamen, and yet after a severe contest of four hours she was compelled to surrender. Bland was made a post-captain, and, when we consider the greatness of the odds over which he triumphed it is not too much to say that during the whole war no promotion was better earned. Captain Manley Dixon, in the *Lion*, 64, when cruising between the Balearic Isles and the Straits, emulated the action fought by Nelson in the *Agamemnon* with the four frigates. He also fell in with four Spanish frigates of thirty-four guns each, and when, as the French frigates had fled from the *Agamemnon*, these also fled from him, he first gained the weather-gage of them by a skilful manœuvre, and then bore down and attacked them. One of them, *La Santa Dorotea*, had carried away her fore-topmast in attempting to escape, so, in the hope of bringing the whole squadron to action, Captain Dixon manœuvred to cut her off, and succeeded.

The others gallantly came to the assistance of their consort, but being very indifferently handled by their officers they gave the *Lion* an opportunity of pouring heavy broadsides into them, to which they were able to make but a feeble reply. A second attempt to aid her met with no better fortune, and at last they left her to her fate. Thus abandoned, her captain Don Manuel Gervais, still fought with great gallantry, but he was manifestly overmatched; after a short combat he found his ship almost dismasted, and struck. He had lost above fifty men, while the *Lion* had but two men wounded. In the course of the next year we shall have again to speak of Captain Dixon as the chief actor in a still more memorable conflict.

One achievement, conspicuous for the judgment by which it was accomplished, was performed by Captain Richard King. He was captain of the 36-gun frigate *Sirius*, and was cruising off the Texel within sight of that port, when, at the latter end of October, he fell in with a Dutch frigate of the same size as his own, the *Furie*, 36, accompanied by the *Waakzaamheid*, a fine 24-gun corvette. As the two Dutchmen were not closer together, there seemed a chance of Captain King being able to pass between them, and engage them separately; and he entertained great hopes of doing so when he found that, of the three, the *Sirius* was by far the best sailer. The frigate was the nearest to him, but had he stopped to engage her, he saw that the corvette would have had time to escape: accordingly he disregarded what was apparently the noblest, and as such the more tempting antagonist, and passed by her in pursuit of the corvette. Her commander was a prudent man, and, seeing that he was overmatched at once surrendered; King lost as little time as possible in taking possession of her, and then made all sail after the *Furie*. A seven hours chase brought him up with her also, and then a fierce conflict ensued, as might be expected when the com-

batants were so nearly equal ; (they were not quite equal, since though the number of guns on each side was the same, those of the British frigate were the heavier.) At the end of half an hour the Dutchman struck, and Captain King returned to England with his two prizes. Their capture was an important service, since they were heavily laden with arms and military stores, and were bound for Ireland to place their cargo at the disposal of the rebels in that country, who were well requited for their traitorous reliance on foreign aid by finding that aid fail them on every occasion, and, on more than one, involve them in graver misfortunes than would have been their lot had they trusted to their own unassisted resources.

It was but a poor set-off against all these disasters which befel all our enemies, French, Spaniards, and Dutch, that one French frigate, the *Charente*, 36, when attacked off the mouth of the Gironde, by Sir J. B. Warren, with his own ship, the *Canada*, 74, and two frigates, escaped from a squadron which might have been expected to annihilate her, chiefly in consequence of the *Canada* grounding on a shoal and requiring the assistance of both her consorts, who were thus forced to discontinue their chase of the lucky Frenchman ; or even that another French frigate, *La Bayonnaise*, at the beginning of December cruising off the port of Bordeaux, captured the *Ambuscade*, a vessel considerably stronger than herself. The *Ambuscade*, commanded by Captain H. Jenkins, carried forty guns : *La Bayonnaise* had only thirty-two ; and with the exception of two 36-lb. carronades, they were all of a calibre inferior to the armament of the British frigate. In the number of her crew, alone, the British ship fell short of her antagonist ; her complement was only 212 men and boys, and of them above twenty were away in prizes, while 280 men were the regular crew of the French vessel. The odds were greatly in our favour, but all the accidents of the battle were against us,

One of the Ambuscade's guns burst, staving in the boats, knocking the gangway to pieces, and disabling nearly a dozen men. Presently the captain was severely, it was for some time believed, mortally wounded; the first-lieutenant was killed; the master was killed; Lieutenant Sinclair, the officer in command of the marines, was severely wounded; the other lieutenant who was lying in his hammock ill, till he was roused to take the command, was carried down again with a wound in the head. The command devolved on the purser; and while he, though not generally reckoned among the fighting party of the crew, was exerting himself gallantly to keep up the spirits of his men, who were beginning to be disheartened by the successive fall of all their principal officers, a heap of cartridges caught fire and exploded, and, blowing out part of the stern of the vessel, and wounding many of the crew, completed the discouragement of the rest. Before they could recover from their consternation the French boarded the Ambuscade, and she surrendered. Our loss in killed and wounded was heavy, but not so heavy as that of the French. But the directors of the French marine, and the nation in general, paid little regard to the fall of a few men, when weighed against the unwonted achievement of the capture of an English ship by a French vessel of a smaller size. They promoted their officers, distributed large pecuniary rewards among their seamen; while every circumstance of the action supplied a favourite topic for their naval annalists, and even at the distance of nearly a quarter of a century, still furnished a popular subject for their marine painters.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1799.

Our general success in 1799-1800 — Inefficiency of our allies — Admiral Bruix puts to sea from Brest — Lord Bridport retires to Cape Clear — Bruix enters the Mediterranean — Lord Keith quits Cadiz and joins Lord St. Vincent — Lord St. Vincent pursues the French — Sends reinforcements to Nelson — The French join the Spanish fleet at Carthagena — Return to Brest — Nelson sends Troubridge to Alexandria, who is unable to burn the French transports — He delivers up the blockade of Alexandria to Sir S. Smith, and rejoins Nelson — Intrigues and treachery of the Neapolitans — General Naselli at Leghorn — Nelson obtains troops from General Stuart to protect Messina — Prepares to receive the attack of the French fleet — Troubridge recovers Procida, Ischia, &c. — Captain Foote takes Castel a Mare — Grants a capitulation to the castles Uovo and Nuovo — Nelson annuls it — Treason and execution of Prince Caraccioli — Capua and Gaeta are taken — Nelson disobeys Lord Keith's orders — Sir James Erskine refuses soldiers to act against Rome — Troubridge takes Rome — Nelson is made Duke of Bronté — Siege of Acre — Gallantry and skill of Sir Sidney Smith — Buonaparte raises the siege — Returns to France — The Dutch fleet surrenders to Lord Duncan — Capture of the Forte by the Sibylle — The Clyde takes La Vestale — Sir Harry Neale and Captain Hubert repulse a French squadron — Exploits and fate of La Preneuse — Capture of the Spanish treasure ships — Exploits of the Speedy.

THE next two years present a great contrast to the two whose history we have last related. Both we and our enemies still kept great fleets upon the sea; but not one single general engagement nor action between considerable squadrons took place. In combats between single ships we continued to have almost invariably the advantage; our entire loss in the years 1799 and 1800 being limited to a 10-gun brig, and a schooner of still smaller size: while among our captures we could reckon upwards of thirty French and Spanish ships of the line and frigates, and the whole of the Dutch fleet that lay in the Texel. So greatly indeed had our navy been of late augmented

at the expense of our combined foes, that we almost desisted from building seventy-fours and heavy frigates ; and, had it not been for the extensive repairs of which our prizes stood in need (since the French rarely surrendered them till the damage which they had received absolutely compelled their submission), a great portion of our shipwrights would have been almost wholly without employment.

Although, as has been mentioned in the preceding chapter, the victory of the Nile had encouraged the enemies of France to reunite in a powerful coalition against her, and, by land, mighty armies were inflicting on her a succession of severe overthrows, the whole burden of the naval war still rested on Britain alone. The Turks and Russians took scarcely any steps to fulfil the engagements into which they had entered ; and though the Portuguese had sent, and still retained the Marquis de Niza with a squadron in the Mediterranean, to act under Nelson's orders, it was so totally inefficient that that great officer found it a hindrance rather than an assistance. One especial addition to his vexations was caused by the pretensions of the individual officers. Almost every captain of a Portuguese ship bore the rank of a "chef de division," answering to our title of commodore : and in virtue of this nominal rank they claimed to command the English captains, whenever and wherever Nelson himself was not present. He at once denounced the claim as ridiculous and untenable, and, having obtained Lord St. Vincent's sanction, laid down the rule that "Every captain under his command, in a line-of-battle ship, must command a 'chef de division' in the Portuguese service." He assured the Portuguese officers "that he had no desire to lower their rank, but, on the contrary, to exalt it ; but not at the expense of the rank of those in the English navy." He added that, if under this regulation, the commodores refused to continue to serve,



“their ships must remain, and the next senior officer must command them.” “The Marquis de Niza himself had no authority to alter his regulations;” and Nelson asserted with truth that the Portuguese Government was as fully interested in exacting obedience to his orders as his own Sovereign.

We kept the sea throughout the winter. One fleet was watching Brest under a succession of Admirals, the last of whom was Lord Bridport, the commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet, who, in the middle of April, arrived himself to take the command. Another under Lord Keith, as second in command to Lord St. Vincent, was blockading the Spaniards in Cadiz: while the force within the Mediterranean was broken up into several small squadrons; Hood still keeping his position in Egypt, Ball at Malta, Duckworth lying off Minorca, while Nelson himself hovered about the southern part of the coast of Italy, considering himself responsible for the personal safety of the Neapolitan royal family, and watching eagerly for the opportunity, which he foresaw to be at hand, to replace the King in his capital.

The French had very few ships of any class left in the Mediterranean; but during the winter they had collected and equipped a splendid fleet at Brest, under the eye of Admiral Bruix, the Minister of Marine, himself, who was preparing to assume the command, and by the middle of April it was ready for service. Lord Bridport had sixteen sail of the line, and a few frigates; and with them, on the 25th of April he reconnoitred Brest, and saw the French apparently preparing to put to sea. He could not ascertain their precise force, but it would seem that he discerned it to be superior to his own, as he fell back towards Ushant; and the same evening Bruix got under way, and made sail towards the south-west. His fleet amounted to twenty-five sail of the line, four of them being splendid first-rates, one of 120, and three of 110 guns,

with ten frigates, and smaller vessels : a force to which Lord Bridport might fairly be excused for considering himself unequal, after they had gained the open sea ; though in the narrow entrance to the harbour their numbers would not probably have enabled them to force a passage, had not his withdrawal left it open to them. He was not long left in ignorance of their departure : they were hardly clear of the harbour when they were seen by one of our frigates, who at once conveyed the intelligence to him ; and he, suspecting that their destination was the Irish coast, hastened thither himself ; sending one despatch to Lord St. Vincent to announce the fact of their having sailed ; and another to Portsmouth with the same news, and with an urgent request that reinforcements might join him at Cape Clear. They were sent without delay, and in a short time he found himself at the head of six-and-twenty sail of the line ; but he had no opportunity of showing their prowess. The belief which he had adopted of the object of the enemy was the same which they wished him to entertain ; and, to confirm him in it, they threw a boat in the way of his frigates with despatches for Ireland, while the Paris newspapers ostentatiously announced that country as their destination. But in fact they steered to the south, and on the 4th of May arrived in the neighbourhood of Cadiz, which, as has been mentioned before, Lord Keith was blockading, with, at that time fifteen sail of the line under his command. Some of their ships were seen by him, and he was seen by them ; but, in spite of their superiority of number, they forbore to attack him : being apparently contented with letting the Spaniards in Cadiz know their movements, and by their appearance in those waters, inviting them to a junction. Lord Keith sent information of their approach to Lord St. Vincent, who was at Gibraltar ; but, before the vessel which bore it could reach him, the Commander-in-chief had already seen them enter the

Mediterranean. He at once summoned Lord Keith to join him, and, resuming the command himself, on the 12th of May, followed in pursuit. At Minorca he picked up Duckworth and his squadron, and then, having twenty sail of the line, besides frigates, he moved up towards Toulon.

Few passages in naval history are more strange than the events of the next few weeks ; during which two large fleets were constantly cruising to and fro in the small space between Genoa and Gibraltar without once meeting. That this was the case was partly owing to the singular manner in which the chief command was exercised on our side. Lord St. Vincent, while he continued at sea, being too unwell to display his former energy ; and yet, when he had retired to Minorca, and had entrusted the command to Lord Keith, interfering with his movements by continued messages, and frequently-changed orders. He was probably led so to interfere by the very moderate opinion which he seems to have entertained of Lord Keith's capacity for extensive command ; but it can hardly be doubted that his conduct was injudicious, and unfair too to that officer, who, though far inferior to such men as himself and Nelson, ought yet, while in effect commander-in chief, to have been allowed the uncontrolled direction of his own movements.

Lord St. Vincent did not proceed as far as Toulon, for on his way he learnt that the Spanish fleet, of seventeen sail of the line, of which six were first-rate, had quitted Cadiz, on Lord Keith's raising the blockade, and had reached Carthagená. He was not aware that they had met with a gale on their way which had dismasted more than half of them, and, thinking it of paramount importance to prevent their junction with the French, he at once, on hearing that they were at Carthagená, sailed back towards the Spanish coast. But a day or two afterwards news reached him that the French fleet had gone to the eastward, on which he sent immediate information of their

movements to Nelson, and presently, having received a reinforcement from England, despatched Duckworth and his squadron to reinforce that officer, and a few days afterwards strengthened him further with two more ships.

The intelligence, however, which Lord St. Vincent had received, and the conjectures as to the movements of the enemy which he founded on it, proved but partially correct: for they did not proceed beyond Spezzia. And, by the end of May, he became so seriously indisposed that he was forced to relinquish the command of active operations altogether to Lord Keith, and retired to Gibraltar; whence, after a few weeks, finding his illness increase, he returned to Minorca and struck his flag. While he was lying at Gibraltar, Lord Keith for some time worked up and down between Minorca and Toulon: on one occasion falling in with a squadron of French frigates, the whole of which he captured; but failing in all his efforts to find the main French fleet. Once they were just behind him, coasting leisurely along from Genoa to Toulon, which they reached a few hours after he had quitted the entrance to that port to proceed towards Rosas. At last he obtained certain intelligence that at Toulon they had taken on board a quantity of spars, cordage, and other stores requisite to complete the equipment of some ships in process of construction at Spezzia: and immediately he sailed in chase of them, steering for that harbour, and exulting in the certain prospect of bringing them to action; and he had already gained so much upon them as to have been seen by their look-out frigates, when he received two successive despatches from Lord St. Vincent, both summoning him (the latter in the most peremptory terms) to return at once to Port Mahon. Lord St. Vincent had heard of the French having left Toulon, but had not received the further intelligence, on which Lord Keith was acting, of their having gone towards Italy; and consequently had become apprehensive that, after all, Minorca was their

object. Greatly chagrined at being thus baulked of his prey, Lord Keith nevertheless obeyed the unwelcome order, and returned to his commander-in-chief. M. Bruix, thus delivered from all molestation, pursued his way, landed his stores at Spezzia, threw some provisions into Genoa, and then hastened back to Carthagen, where all the Spanish ships that were fit for service joined him : raising his force to forty sail of the line, with nineteen frigates and smaller vessels.

A few days later Lord Keith was reinforced by twelve sail of the line, which Lord Bridport had detached to him from the Channel fleet, when he ascertained that Ireland was in no danger : and, as he was aware that Bruix and the Spaniards had again sailed towards Gibraltar, he resolved to pursue them. He despatched a frigate to Nelson, enjoining him to send a squadron to protect Minorca ; and on the 29th of July he repassed the Straits, three weeks after the combined fleet. They had reached Brest on the 12th of July, and were still there when, at the end of the second week in August, he reached that port. There they remained, till nearly the end of the year, in complete inaction : and after a few days, Lord Keith, seeing no signs of their moving, returned to Gibraltar.

So far there had been great exertions and great bustle, without any corresponding results. As before, everything of importance that was done in the year was done by Nelson and his squadron. As we have already mentioned, he had been painfully anxious to obtain a few bombvessels from any quarter to employ against the French transports and storeships in the harbour of Alexandria : and in the autumn he would have returned thither himself to make an effort for their destruction, had he not considered the safety of the Royal family of Naples to depend on his presence in the Sicilian seas. But he never relinquished the idea ; and in the first week of the new year, having procured a few bombvessels and fireships, he despatched

Troubridge with them and a small squadron to Alexandria to relieve Hood, and to endeavour to destroy the vessels which he should find there: a series of disasters, such as the mortars bursting and the fireships being lost in a storm, prevented the success of the expedition; and Troubridge, according to his orders, having delivered up the blockade of Alexandria to Sir Sidney Smith, returned with his squadron, and all the ships which he had found in Egypt, except the *Theseus*, to rejoin Nelson.

Nelson had closed the preceding year by removing the King and his family in safety to Palermo. He was now directing all his energies so to co-operate with the efforts which were being made on land to repel and eject the French, as to bring about Ferdinand's return to his capital. But he was no longer in a position where he was to prosecute his aims by his own nautical and warlike skill, and the courage of his sailors: he was beset and baffled by the intrigues and folly, to give it no harder name, of a worthless Court and a degraded people. He and Troubridge, and indeed all the British officers concerned in these transactions, gradually came to the opinion, that, of the Neapolitan nobles who had any share in the management of affairs, all were either cowards or traitors, and the greater part were both. Few deemed it necessary for their characters to profess to be either loyal or brave; he reported to Lord St. Vincent, that one party at Naples were for establishing a republic: that another proposed to make the Duke of Parma their king; that the third party, who were willing to fight the French, was very small indeed. And even the professional soldiers drew refined and subtle distinctions which were wholly past his comprehension. Towards the end of the year 1798, General Naselli got possession of Leghorn; but, though the harbour was full of French privateers, he refused to seize them, because, as he affirmed, the King, his master, was not at war with the French. This subterfuge was too much for Nelson's

patience : " Was not," he asked, " the King's flag flying at Gozo and at Malta, not only by his permission, but by his orders ? Was not the flag shot at every day by the French, and was not the fire returned by batteries bearing the King's flag ? Were not Neapolitan ships of war placed under his own orders to fight the French, meet them where they might ? Had not the King sent publicly from Naples guns, mortars, officers, and artillery, to fight against the French, in Malta ? If these acts," he said, " were not tantamount to any written paper, he gave up all knowledge of what was war." In accordance with this cogent reasoning, he pressed Sir W. Hamilton, our Minister at Naples, to demand that orders should be sent for the seizure of every French vessel : but he was forced at last to acquiesce in Leghorn being considered a neutral port.

During the winter he lay principally off Palermo ; feeling that his presence was the strongest discouragement to the revolutionary party, which, in his opinion, had struck roots of some depth in Sicily as on the mainland. He even doubted whether, with the small force which was all that he was able to keep with him, he should be strong enough for that and the other objects which he had in view ; and, under the influence of this apprehension, he urged the Russian and Turkish Admirals, who with their combined squadrons were blockading Corfu, to send as many ships as they could spare to Messina, since that town, which he looked upon as the key of Sicily, was in especial danger now that the French had overrun Calabria. But he got no help ; it is probable that he did not really expect any, and soon found that he had only the resources of his own country to rely upon. As a last hope he wrote to Minorca to General Stuart, to suggest to him to send a thousand of his troops to Messina ; and that excellent officer, without waiting for any formal authority from his superiors, came himself with even a stronger force than Nelson had proposed, and, in Nelson's judgment, saved the island.

Nelson's own movements depended principally upon those of the Austrian Generals: but his wish was to return to Naples as early in the year as possible; and when, in the middle of March, Troubridge returned from Egypt, he at once sent him and his squadron thither. He particularly desired him to secure the island of Procida, and Troubridge took unresisted possession of that and the other islands in the bay, rehoisted the King's colours in all of them, and reported to Nelson that the population of every one of them was "perfectly mad with joy" at being restored to the government of their native king, and at getting rid of the French. They "had destroyed the Tree of Liberty, and torn the tricoloured flag into ten thousand pieces, so that he was not able to procure even a small remnant of it to lay at the King's feet." With "a few thousand good English troops," he asserted that he "would have the King of Naples on his throne again in forty-eight hours." And the reverses which the French had recently suffered in the north of Italy and in Germany were leading them so to diminish their force at and around Naples, that he began to hope that he should recover it with his blue-jackets alone. Before the end of April, Hood, who had returned with him from Alexandria, did take Salerno, and re-opened the communication by sea between it and Naples; where no French troops were still remaining, except a garrison in the castle of St. Elmo, to whose protection the few Neapolitans had fled, the heinousness of whose treasons had made them despair of pardon. Among these was Prince Caraccioli, formerly captain of the *Tancredi*, who as such, in the time of Lord Hood and Admiral Hotham, had been known to and esteemed by Nelson; but who, though a brave officer, was a man of weak and unstable mind. Thinking the King's cause desperate, he had deserted him, and had joined the revolutionary party; and had even ostentatiously put himself forward in a prominent station, taking the command of the flotilla of gun-



boats which had carried on various hostilities against the King's troops.

Troubridge, however, was not allowed time to carry into effect all the operations which he was contemplating. About the middle of May, Nelson received intelligence of the appearance of Admiral Bruix in the Mediterranean; and, thinking that his destination might possibly be Naples, he decided on quitting Palermo for a more central position, whence he might be able effectually to cover the blockade of Naples, and to protect Sicily at the same time. Such a spot he found off the island of Maritimo, at the western extremity of Sicily: and he sent orders to Troubridge and Ball, desiring the first to join him there with all his line-of-battle ships, and the latter to come with as many as could be spared from the blockade of Malta. Even with their aid, his force would not have exceeded ten British sail-of-the-line and three Portuguese: yet with this little force he was resolved to await the enemy, and expressed a confidence that "if they should force him to battle, he should cut a very respectable figure." Troubridge, on the receipt of his orders, eagerly set sail to join him; but Ball was as yet unable to leave Malta with a single ship, since the Russian squadron which Nelson, when he sent for him, had believed to be co-operating in the blockade of that fortress, had not arrived. The French, however, did not show themselves; but, at the end of the month, having heard that they were beating back to the westward, Nelson returned to Palermo, hoping soon to receive reinforcements which might enable him to seek instead of awaiting them.

Troubridge, when he brought the line-of-battle ships to join him, had, by his orders, left his frigates at Naples under the command of Captain Foote of the Seahorse. And that officer, who, though a brave and skilful seaman, had no capacity for any duty beyond the strict line of his profession, was greatly embarrassed by the various and onerous tasks which his seniority imposed upon him.

Emboldened by the departure of the Culloden, Caraccioli, at the head of the rebellious party, threatened to attack the islands; and Foote was perplexed, not only by the menaced danger, but by the imbecility or dishonesty of the commander of the Royalist force on land, who, curiously enough, was a great ecclesiastical dignity, the Cardinal Ruffo. Foote's first operations were directed against Castel à Mar, where a strongly fortified castle was occupied by a sufficient garrison and against an adjacent fort of less importance, but still of considerable strength, which stood on a steep rock known as Revigliano. Both places were well able to make a stout resistance; and, to save time, Foote granted their garrisons a capitulation of very favourable terms, and then proceeded to Naples itself. Besides St. Elmo there were two other forts contributing to the defence of the city, lying nearer the sea, and known as the castles of Uovo and Nuovo.\* And on the 18th of June, Foote

\* I have not judged it necessary here to enter into an elaborate defence of Nelson's conduct. That has been so recently and so completely justified by Sir Harris Nicolas ('Nelson's Despatches,' vol. iii., Appendix C., p. 477-528) that to repeat his arguments and demonstrations seems needless. The general belief that Nelson was chargeable with a breach of faith in annulling the capitulation entered into by Captain Foote to the Cardinal, is a singular proof how prone most readers are to accept a fact without examination, if it has been stated by a popular writer and in a lively style. Though Southey did not originate the attack upon Nelson, it was he who, in his exquisite sketch of his career, gave currency and vitality to it. He was deceived by the narrative of a woman called Williams, whom Sir H. Nicolas shows to have been (as Nelson more than once remarked) exceedingly ignorant of all the transactions which she professed to relate, and who was influenced in libelling Nelson solely by the republican opinions which she had adopted. With such doctrines Southey himself at one time had been deeply imbued, and when he wrote his biographical sketch of Nelson, he was still so far infected with them that, in his relation of these very transactions, he sympathises in no small degree with the Jacobins as enemies to monarchy, and not only affirms that "they were regarded by the English with more hatred than they deserved;" but, in comparing them to some whom he classes as English patriots, he actually ranks the Duke of Monmouth as one of these, and speaks of his rebellion as a "premature but not unworthy attempt," and of him as "having the same object as the prime movers of our own revolution." A man whose prejudices could at that time lead him so to misrepresent one of the most notorious events in our own history, was clearly not a very

stood in to the bay in order to attack Castel Uovo, which stands on a narrow neck of land connected with the mainland by a drawbridge. He summoned the commander of the French garrison, received a defiance, and announced to the Cardinal his intention of at once assaulting the fort; but, the next morning, he had hardly opened his fire when he received a message from Ruffo begging him to desist from hostilities as long as a flag of truce, which had just been hoisted, was kept flying, since he was negotiating with the French commander for a peaceful surrender of the forts. Foote was ignorant that the King had expressly forbidden the Cardinal to treat with rebels at all; but he knew enough of his profession to decide that any protracted suspension of hostilities was unusual and improper, and he accordingly protested against it. But, as Ruffo was obstinate, and argued that he had the approval of the commander of some Russian troops which were co-operating with his army, the British captain weakly permitted himself to be overruled; and, after a little more hesitation, affixed his name to a "plan of capitulation" which the Cardinal had drawn up: protesting at the same time to the Cardinal, that he only did so "because he considered him as the confidential agent of His Sicilian Majesty; but that he could not say that he approved of such a mode of treating, and that he could not be answerable for its consequences." In the same spirit, three days afterwards, he signed the capitulation itself, again protesting to his colleague "against everything that could be in the least contrary to the honour and rights of his own sovereign and the British nation."\*

Meanwhile Nelson himself was approaching the scene of

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trustworthy guide on any political question. Even he, however, was forced to admit that Caraccioli was not protected by the capitulation which Captain Foote signed. That Nelson was commander-in-chief of the Neapolitan, as of the Portuguese fleet, Southey was wholly ignorant; and on that ignorance he founds no small portion of the arguments on which he relies for pronouncing on Nelson's culpability.

\* See Captain Foote's own statement in Sir H. Nicolas, pp. 479, 480.

action. On the 7th of June, Duckworth joined him with four ships, into one of which, the *Foudroyant*, 80, he shifted his flag: and in the course of the next few days he was further reinforced by two seventy-fours from the main fleet, and by Ball with the *Alexander* and *Goliath* from Malta. So that he had now eighteen sail of the line with him, including nearly the whole of his old Nile fleet. Could he have obtained two three-deckers, he would at once have gone in pursuit of Bruix to bring him to battle; but, even with his existing force, he considered himself strong enough to propose to Ferdinand to escort him back to Naples. The king gladly accepted his offer. On the 21st the fleet sailed, and arrived in the bay on the morning of the 24th. On his way Nelson received letters from which he learnt that Foote had entered into some kind of treaty with the rebels in the two castles; though as to its precise nature he was misinformed, since he was led to believe it to be only an armistice or truce. Of whatever nature it might be, he looked upon it as both improper in principle and beyond Captain Foote's power to grant; and, while still at a distance, he made a signal to annul it. The rule which guided him was that though, as an English officer, Captain Foote might have an implied power to negotiate with the enemies of his own sovereign, he could have none to stand between the King of Naples and his rebellious subjects. And it was rather in his character of commander-in-chief of the Neapolitan navy, than as admiral of the English fleet, that he disavowed the treaty which had been signed. No step had been taken towards the execution of a single article in it, nor, when the garrisons of the castles dell' Uovo and Nuovo learnt that the treaty was annulled, did they, though the personal safety of many among them depended on it, raise the slightest doubt of his authority and right to refuse to ratify it; nor did the Russians, who were parties to it; nor did Captain Foote himself, though after

Nelson's death he permitted himself to call both the propriety of the act and the great Admiral's motives in question, raise the least objection to his decision. The moment that Nelson approached the shore he sent formal notice to the castles that the capitulation which had been signed, was annulled; and that the garrison, or that portion of it which consisted of Neapolitan subjects, if they surrendered at all, must submit to the King's mercy. The dishonesty of Ruffo, in having desired to grant the rebels favorable conditions, was shown by the fact that this peremptory denial of all terms produced no alteration in their conduct. They had, in fact, no means whatever of resistance to the force brought against them; and they now surrendered unconditionally.\* The greater portion of them were kept as prisoners on board the British fleet, till Ferdinand himself arrived from Palermo a week or two afterwards, when they were given up to the officers of his Government. Nelson probably viewed with equal disapprobation the terms of capitulation which Captain Foote had granted to the garrisons of Castel à Mare and Bevigliano: but, as they had already been in part carried into effect by the surrender of the forts, he considered himself bound to execute them in their completeness; and, though some of the King's advisers urged a contrary opinion with great earnestness, his authority prevailed, and no punishment was inflicted on any of the rebels who had been in those forts, when Foote summoned them to surrender.

\* Sir Harris Nicholas has abundantly proved not only that it is a principle of international law that if an officer exceeds his authority (much more if he acts in disobedience to orders, as Ruffo did in this instance) in entering into a treaty, his superiors have a right to annul it; but that others besides Nelson acted on this principle in the course of this same war. Thus Prince Schwartzenberg annulled a capitulation which General Klenau had granted to St. Cyr after the battle of Leipsic. Thus the Emperor Alexander refused to ratify one which Prince Alexander of Wurtemberg had concluded with General Rapp. Nor did Napoleon, than whom no man was ever more ingenious or more unscrupulous in bringing charges of bad faith against his enemies, ever dream of alleging that his officers had been hardly treated in either of these instances.

Of the treason which had driven the King for a time from his capital, as much probably proceeded from sheer cowardice as from any real affection entertained by the traitors for republican principles. It had, however, been widely spread, and had produced much bloodshed and misery ; and Nelson, who held cowards and republicans in almost equal detestation, was firmly convinced of the necessity of making some severe examples. Of all the traitors the most guilty was Caraccioli, who with his gun-boats had caused great annoyance to Captain Foote, in the beginning of his operations ; when Castel à Mare surrendered, and it became evident that the recovery of Naples also would soon follow, he took refuge for a day or two in one of the forts at Naples, from which he presently escaped to Calviranno, a small town in the interior, and implored the intercession of its duke. Since, however, he had but little hope that such intercession, even if exerted, would be effectual, he immediately afterwards fled in disguise to the mountains. As soon as Naples was recovered, the authorities, acting in the King's name, offered a reward for his apprehension. He was speedily discovered, and on the 29th of June was brought, clad in the garb of a peasant, alongside the Foudroyant, at that time Nelson's flagship. Nelson had now to act as Neapolitan Commander-in-chief ; as such he clearly had Caraccioli as a naval officer under his orders ; and as such he issued a warrant to Count Thurn, the commander, under himself, of the Sicilian squadron which had preserved its loyalty to the King, to hold a court-martial to try the prisoner on the charges of rebellion and of carrying on war against his lawful sovereign. Count Thurn at once collected the proper officers to form such a tribunal ; and the trial took place the same morning. It was held on board the flagship, from which Caraccioli had not been removed ; it did not last long, for indeed the truth of the charges brought against the unhappy man was notorious and un-

deniable. And the excuse, it should rather be said the plea for mercy, which he advanced on the ground that he had acted under compulsion, was invalidated by distinct proof that, had he chosen, he had had abundant opportunities of withdrawing himself from the command of the gunboats, and had refrained from doing so. The court unanimously found him guilty, and condemned him to death ; it was impossible for them to avoid doing so. Nelson had always entertained the opinion which he had lately expressed to Troubridge, as a general rule of conduct, that "Speedy rewards and quick punishments are the foundation of good government."\* Two years before, he had warmly commended Lord St. Vincent for his instant execution of the mutineers of the *St. George* ; and the adherence to this sound and wise principle seemed to him never to have been more imperatively called for than at a time and in a country where honesty was so scarce, disloyalty so rife. Without hesitation he confirmed the sentence and issued his warrant, appointing the same evening for its execution. Caraccioli was at once removed on board the Sicilian frigate *La Minerva*, and hung at the fore yard-arm at five o'clock. A few days afterwards the King himself returned from Sicily to Naples, and expressed the warmest approval of every part of Nelson's conduct : a judgment in which, two or three months afterwards, his own superiors at the Admiralty announced their most complete agreement.

It still remained to reduce the castle of St. Elmo, which was held by the most numerous of all the French garrisons that had been employed around Naples, consisting as it did of 800 men, well supplied with provisions and ammunition. The attack was entrusted by Nelson to Troubridge, who carried it on with his usual vigour. The French, too, fought gallantly, and their artillery was well served. Their heavy fire destroyed one three-gun battery which Troubridge constructed, but he immediately erected another of double

\* See his letter to Troubridge, March 30, 1799. Desp. iii. 310.

the force at only 180 yards from the walls, and, though he was greatly hindered by the cowardice, and, as he believed, treachery of the Neapolitan troops who were professing to co-operate with him, by his dauntless exposure of himself he stimulated his own men to such efforts that they soon compelled the garrison to submit. The reduction of St. Elmo completed the recovery of Naples; and without loss of time Troubridge carried his blue-jackets inland, and marched against Capua with a naval brigade of a thousand seamen and marines. Hallowell was joined with him in this expedition, and their united energy soon proved irresistible. The day they arrived in front of the town they threw a bridge of pontoons across the Volturno, and began to construct batteries. In three days more they opened a cannonade and bombardment upon the town, and, when the next day fresh batteries were preparing to open their fire, the garrison hung out the white flag, and nearly 3000 Frenchmen surrendered to a third of their number of British sailors. It might be fancied that the air of Capua had still the same enervating effect that was attributed to it in the days of Hannibal. When the victors took possession they were surprised, as they well might be, at their conquest; for they found in the town above 100 guns in serviceable condition, and nearly 68,000 pounds of gunpowder, with other stores in proportion. Had the place been held by a British garrison of the same number, equally well supplied, it is not too much to say that the whole Neapolitan army would have failed to take Capua. Gaeta, though smaller in extent, was a still stronger place; but the French were so dispirited at our successes, that they surrendered that fortress, important as it was from its commanding position on the shore, without firing a single gun in its defence; and thus, by the end of July, the whole kingdom of Naples was freed from its French invaders.

On the surrender of St. Elmo, Nelson had removed



Captain Hood on shore, and placed him as commander of a garrison of British seamen in Castel Nuovo to secure the peace of the capital. And, early in July, King Ferdinand himself arrived from Palermo, and for some days occupied the Foudroyant as his head-quarters, hoisting his royal standard on board the British flagship. But he had scarcely reached it when Nelson's perplexities were greatly increased by an order to send "as many of his ships as he could possibly spare" to Minorca, on which Lord Keith evidently expected an immediate attack. Nelson had always held the doctrine that considerable latitude was to be given to an officer in obeying orders sent from a distance, since the person who had given the order could not possibly tell exactly what would be the state of affairs when it should be delivered ;\* and in anticipation of such command from Lord Keith he had, even before it reached him, decided that he would postpone obedience to it. His own belief, which subsequent events fully verified, was that, though Minorca was threatened, it would not be attacked; but, apart from this consideration, he also considered the recovery of the kingdom of Naples as the more important object of the two. He could not obey the order without withdrawing from Troubridge the sailors who had marched against Capua; and this he would not do. He therefore excused himself to Lord Keith from paying instant obedience to his order on the ground that "at the time of sending it his lordship was not informed of the change of affairs in the kingdom of Naples, nor aware that all the marines and a body of seamen were disembarked" for operations on land; explaining also that, "as he believed that the safety of the kingdom of Naples depended at the

\* He did not claim more licence in this respect than he was willing to concede; often acting on this principle in giving his own orders to his captains. The very next month (Aug. 3, 1799, Desp. iii., 431), he says to Captain G. Martin of the Northumberland, "Relying on your well-known abilities and judgment, you will act in the execution of these orders as circumstances may arise."

moment on his detaining the squadron, he had no scruple in deciding that it was better to save the kingdom of Naples and risk Minorca, than to risk the kingdom of Naples to save Minorca." The moment that Capua should fall he promised to send a squadron to Mahon ; a few days afterwards, learning that Lord Keith had left the Mediterranean, he did despatch Duckworth with three sail of the line to that port, even before he heard of Troubridge's success ; and the moment that Capua and Gaeta had both submitted, he sent him a reinforcement sufficient to secure the island from any force the French could move against it, though still adhering to his opinion that no attack would be made.

His judgment proved correct and successful in every particular ; but the authorities at the Admiralty, afraid probably of sanctioning a precedent which might be misused by men of inferior capacity, thought it necessary to intimate their disapproval of his "having disobeyed the orders he had received from his commanding officer." They likewise rebuked him for his conduct in a matter which might have been supposed to have been entirely left to his own discretion, the entrusting Troubridge and his men with the siege of Capua. They commended him for confiding the siege of St. Elmo to such a force, since that fort lay on the shore ; but they condemned the employment of seamen, "at a distance from the ships," since a defeat might prevent them from returning to them : "a misfortune by which the whole squadron might be disabled." They therefore directed him "not to employ the seamen in like manner in future." Nelson, in whom pride in his profession was only second to love for his country, was not much moved by the reproof. He exulted that the deliverance of the kingdom of Italy had been the work of British sailors ; between whom and their comrades in the army he was fond of drawing comparisons not greatly to the advantage of the latter. And this

feeling of his, which had probably been originally implanted in his breast by the imbecility of General Dundas in 1794, was strengthened now by his discontent with Sir James Erskine, the general commanding at Minorca. As soon as Naples was delivered from the French, Nelson sent Captain George Martin in the Northumberland to the coast of Genoa, to co-operate with the great Russian General Suvarow, who was driving the French before him in that district, and who had recently inflicted on them an overwhelming defeat at Novi; and he despatched Troubridge with three sail of the line to the mouth of the Tiber to clear the Roman states of the French. They were still in some strength at Civita Vecchia, a town on the coast a few miles north of the Tiber. From this stronghold they were plundering the whole district without mercy; and, as he desired not only to expel them, but to expel them without delay, he wrote to Minorca to beg Sir James to lend him 1200 soldiers. They were refused. The General looked only at the difficulties of the undertaking, to which he pronounced such a force as Nelson asked wholly inadequate, since Civita Vecchia was "a regular fortress;" and Nelson, who probably had a hope that, after the troops had reduced Civita Vecchia, their commander might be induced to move them to Malta, which he felt sure could not stand before such a force for three days, was thrown wholly upon his own resources and those of Troubridge. As usual, they did not fail him. Troubridge at once summoned the garrison, telling their commander that a Russian force was approaching which would undoubtedly send them all to Siberia. The commander, M. Hennique, desired to argue the point, and maintained the legal right of the French to the Roman territory on the ground that it belonged to them "by conquest." Troubridge rejoined that "it was his by conquest." An Austrian detachment tried to interfere and gave Troubridge more trouble as allies than the French caused

him as enemies ; and at one time he was not sure that he should not have to fight a duel with Frölick, the Austrian General. At last his firmness got the better of both. He laid the Culloden under the walls of Civita Vecchia ; it surrendered. He took possession of the fortress, its submission rendering the French in Rome helpless : he sent Captain Louis of the *Minotaur* in his barge up the Tiber ; and on the 30th of September that officer hoisted British colours on the Capitol.

These successive triumphs were all a portion of the consequences of the one great triumph of the Nile ; and as such the King of Naples acknowledged them with a kingly liberality. The anniversary of that battle he celebrated with magnificent festivities. Ferdinand dined with Nelson, and when the King drank the Admiral's health a royal salute was fired from all his ships and batteries : the whole city of Naples was illuminated, columns were raised, and music was composed in Nelson's honour. The hero, in reporting these festive compliments to his wife said truly that, though they did not make him vain, they made him grateful ; and he soon had yet further cause for gratitude. Ferdinand gave him a magnificent sword, which, on taking the royal authority on himself, he had received from his father ; and he gave him also the dukedom of Bronte in Sicily, with a domain valued at 3000*l.* a year. The sword, as an honorary present, Nelson gladly accepted ; but he could hardly be persuaded to enrich himself by the King's magnificent grant, till Ferdinand claimed of him that he should not cause his royal name to be handed down to posterity under the stigma of ingratitude. Though the circumstance hardly belongs to our naval history, it is too characteristic of Nelson to be omitted, that the very first use he made of his newly-acquired wealth was to place a sixth of it at the yearly disposal of his father, who, by the singular goodness of Providence, was permitted to live to see his son thus attain to the topmost

pinnacle of human glory, with a heart as tender and affectionate, as pure and as true, as when, on his first boyish entrance into his profession, he perilled his life to take him home a bearskin as a present.

While these great things were doing in the western portion of the Mediterranean, deeds of equal glory were being performed on its eastern shores, they also being a part of the fruits of the great victory of the preceding year. We have seen how Sir Sidney Smith, at the beginning of the spring, was entrusted with the command of Alexandria; and it was soon apparent that the command which he had so ambitiously solicited was no bed of roses, but it also appeared that he was fully equal to its difficulties. He reached Alexandria on the 3rd of March; and it was already known that Buonaparte was in Syria with his army, marching towards St. Jean d'Acre: a town, as far back as the time of Cœur de Lion, of great importance from the advantages of its situation and the strength of its fortifications; celebrated too for the numerous and fierce struggles which had taken place around its walls, and now destined to be the scene of more terrible and momentous contests than it had ever before witnessed; of the labours of the greatest military genius who ever girded on a sword in that oft-contested country; and of the first blow given to that warrior's ambition, which, though for a moment it seemed to threaten him with ruin, was probably the real cause of all his subsequent greatness, by driving him back to Europe at the very moment when the field was most open to his audacious spirit.

Troubridge, as has been mentioned, had failed in one attempt to bombard the vessels in the harbour of Alexandria; and after Sir Sidney joined him, the two officers, in a second enterprise of the same kind, met with an equal disappointment. While preparing for this enterprise, Sir Sidney had despatched Lieutenant Wright, who had been the companion of his escape from the Temple, to arrange

his future operations with the Pacha of Syria, Ahmed Djezzar, who was now at Acre preparing for the impending attack of the French army. He soon learnt that Buonaparte had invaded Syria, had taken Jaffa by storm, and was hastening on by forced marches towards Acre, which he threatened with the same fate.

At the end of the first week in March, Troubridge quitted Alexandria to rejoin Nelson at Palermo, leaving Captain Miller in the *Theseus* under Sir Sidney's command. As soon as intelligence of the threatened advance of the French upon Acre reached the Commodore, he sent forward the *Theseus* to that town, the walls of which run down so close to the water's edge, that the mastery of the sea was a matter of paramount importance alike to its assailants and its defenders. A few days afterwards he himself followed in the *Tigre*, and on the 15th of March anchored in the bay. He was not too soon. The following day he and Miller, with some officers of engineers, examined the defences of the town, suggested such measures as the brief time at their disposal would permit for strengthening them, and sent some of their seamen on shore to aid in carrying out the necessary repairs or improvements. And the very next evening the advanced guard of the French army was seen approaching. A small river, the Kishon of Holy Writ, lay between them and the town; and at its mouth Sir Sidney immediately placed the *Tigre's* launch, armed with one heavy carronade. It was wisely done: when the French took up their march again the next morning, the carronade dealt such havoc among their ranks that they were forced to retire, and seek a road further from the sea; the main body of their army followed their example, and by so doing came upon the landward side of the town, where the fortifications were both stronger and in better condition than those which looked towards the sea.

Their retirement before a single gun convinced Sir

Sidney that they were marching without artillery, and therefore he inferred that they expected to receive it by sea ; and he at once made preparations to intercept it. His conjecture was correct : a strong flotilla of gunboats had been appointed to join the army from Damietta, and a squadron of frigates and corvettes from Alexandria, both heavily laden with guns and ordnance stores of every kind. The frigates were so closely blockaded in Alexandria that a week of April had passed before they were able to put to sea ; and, though even then the guns and ammunition which they landed were of great service, their aid had not the influence which it would have had, had they come before repeated repulses had damped the courage of the besiegers, and had raised that of the besieged almost to enthusiasm. The flotilla from Damietta never reached the army at all : almost every vessel composing it was captured by the British ships ; and the boats themselves, as well as their arms and stores, were turned against their former masters. Sir Sidney landed the chief part of the guns, and arranged them on the walls of Acre ; manned the boats with men from his own ships, and stationed them along the shore, where they greatly harassed the left wing of the besieging army.

In a few days the French were favoured by a heavy gale of wind, which drove our ships off the coast, and the working parties were enabled to carry their trenches close to the walls, and to begin the construction of a mine. But their progress was rudely checked the moment that the abatement of the gale allowed the ships to return to their anchorage : Sir Sidney at once, in concert with the Pacha, projected a combined attack on the French works, which met with entire success ; a body of picked men from the garrison, powerfully aided by the guns of the *Theseus*, stormed the trenches, levelled the works, and carried back as trophies the arms and trenching-tools which they found there, as well as several dozen heads of the French

soldiers, for each of which they received a reward from their chief: while a detachment of seamen landed in their boats, and did still more important service by destroying the mine.

Buonaparte, however, was not a man to be discouraged by a single reverse. By the second week in April the safe arrival of the squadron from Alexandria supplied him with an efficient battering-train, which he strengthened with some heavy guns from one of the frigates: with these he breached the walls in more than one place; but when he endeavoured to storm the breaches thus made, he was repulsed with great slaughter. The Turks fought admirably behind walls, and the two British seventy-fours, with their launches and gunboats, stood as close in as the depth of water would allow, and powerfully aided the garrison by a heavy and ceaseless cannonade. The assault was repeated again and again with unvarying ill-success. Nine times the French grenadiers had left the bravest of their number at the foot of the breach; and the survivors began to murmur at their General's perseverance in an enterprise which had already occupied more than seven weeks, while the prospect of eventual victory seemed daily more remote, when, on the 7th of May a number of vessels were seen in the offing, pressing with all speed towards the town. For a moment Buonaparte, or at least his soldiers, believed them to be a reinforcement from France; but, as they came nearer, they were ascertained to be a body of Turkish transports, laden with picked troops under the command of Hassan Bey, escorted by a sufficient number of corvettes. They did not come before they were wanted: for if the loss of the French had been heavy, that of the garrison, too scanty from the first, had fully equalled it; and the Pacha's favourite Albanian regiment had dwindled from a thousand to two hundred men.

But their appearance in the distance nearly proved fatal to the town. Buonaparte was probably not aware of the



extent of the loss which he had inflicted, but he saw plainly that his only hope of success now rested on his being able to overpower the garrison before it should be strengthened by this new arrival: and he at once gave orders for a fresh assault, which was executed the same night by his troops, with even more than their usual vigour, and which at first gained advantages over the garrison, which threatened to be decisive. Taught by previous disasters, they had constructed defences which protected the line of their advance from the fire of our shipping; and, though the batteries of the town itself, under the direction of British officers, made fearful gaps in the head of the attacking column as it advanced, they pressed on, and, when day broke on the 8th, the French flag was seen waving on the tower at the north-eastern angle of the walls, which had been the principal object of their assault. So imminent was the danger that Sir Sydney landed himself with every man that could possibly be spared from the ships, and led them to a breach on one side of the captured tower, which he rightly conjectured would be the next object of attack. Djezzar, the moment that he heard of his thus manning the breach, rushed to the spot, and more than once dragged him back with his own hands, protesting that if any harm should befall his English friends he should be lost. It was well, however, that Sir Sydney was there in person, for, just behind this point of the ramparts were the gardens of Djezzar's seraglio, into which no imminence of danger could at first induce the Pacha to admit his troops. Even Sir Sydney's arguments failed to convince him of the necessity for this step, till he found the English Commander resolved, if he could not obtain his sanction, to act without it. At last he permitted him to post a regiment in those sacred precincts. And presently Sir Sidney even trusted them in a sally through the gates, which was only so far success-

ful that it compelled the besiegers, in order to repel it, to expose themselves to the fire of the guns on the walls, which dealt terrible slaughter among them.

Buonaparte had not forgotten his old practice as an artilleryman, and, changing the direction of his fire, now bent all his efforts to make a fresh breach. It was an easy task, for so rotten were the walls that they crumbled before every shot. Before evening a large portion of the rampart was levelled. This new breach was nearly in front of a small rising ground, which, from the time that the English monarch dashed in the gates of the city with his battle-axe, has been known as Cœur de Lion's Mount. On this spot the French commander had now taken his station surrounded by his staff; and, as all his movements were plainly visible to those on the walls, it appeared that he was sending back to his camp for fresh bodies of men to make one more attempt to storm the ramparts which had so often defied him. But by this time one division of Hassan's men had landed, and, as their numbers had raised the garrison to a formidable force, Djezzar proposed to his English ally a new plan for meeting the impending assault, which was more in accordance with the Turkish mode of fighting than a hand-to-hand resistance in the breach itself. Sir Sidney consented, and the Pacha took his seat on a vacant spot behind a yet undamaged portion of the wall, accompanied by his secretary and cashier. The secretary had before him an open book in which to enter the names of all those who distinguished themselves by bringing to the Pacha a Frenchman's head. The cashier had a large bag of money to pay down for each head fifty piastres; while Djezzar himself, with a huge pair of scissors, was cutting a thin silver plate into figures to imitate a chelengk or plume of honour, with which he proposed to decorate the caps of his successful warriors. These preparations were hardly completed when the

French grenadiers began to swarm up the breach. To their astonishment they met with no resistance ; but, as they leapt down into the town, the Turks, who were lying behind on each side, closed with them, a sabre in their right hand, a dagger in their left. The assailants had no time to form, no room to use the bayonet ; brave and skilful warriors as they were, they fell almost without a struggle, and their heads were carried in triumph to the Pacha, and piled before him in regular rows, like (to use the comparison made by an English seaman) “ so many cabbages at Covent Garden.” The stormers had been led by General Lannes, then, and for many years renowned as one of the most dauntless heroes of his nation ; he was desperately wounded, and with difficulty saved by his men. Another general, Rimbaud, was killed. After suffering enormous loss, the assailing columns were at last withdrawn ; but Buonaparte, to whose future plans of conquest the possession of Acre was indispensable, would not yet abandon the attempt. He sent for a fresh division of his army which, under the command of General Kleber, was guarding the fords of the Jordan, and had lately distinguished itself by the repulse of a greatly superior number of native troops near Nazareth.

While awaiting their arrival he gave the besieged some respite ; but they gave him none. Sir Sidney, whose liking for diplomacy almost equalled his ardour for fighting, made such skilful use of the defeats he had inflicted on the French army, that he now persuaded the chieftains of the surrounding tribes in Syria to show themselves openly as the allies of the Sultan ; and they accordingly began to cut off the supplies which from different quarters were proceeding to the French camp ; while the garrison itself, on one occasion, made a successful sally against the trenches, destroying the works and spiking the guns ; the only active measure of retalia-

tion which Buonaparte adopted being to hire two renegade Turks to attempt to assassinate the English Commodore. They were discovered and executed. At last, on the 19th of May, eleven days after the defeat of Lannes and his party, Kleber's division joined the army, and preparations were instantly made for a last assault. It was received as the preceding attack had been met. The unresisted French mounted the breach and descended on the other side, again to fall helpless beneath the sabre and dagger of the garrison, who decapitated each man as he fell. A second general was slain, and the whole army protested against a repetition of the enterprise. At last Buonaparte raised the siege, leaving his guns behind him ; and, marching almost without a halt, by the middle of June reached Cairo. He confessed a loss of upwards of three thousand men : and it may be assumed as certain that the real diminution of his army had been far greater than he thought it politic to admit. That the repulse he had suffered defeated all his plans for the future conquest of the East, he did not attempt to conceal ; referring to it with bitterness long after his subsequent triumph and greatness might have been expected to have effaced the recollection of his disappointment from his mind ; and still execrating the British captain as the man who " had made him miss his destiny."

During the progress of the siege we ourselves suffered one disaster, not indeed inflicted by the French, but productive of great sorrow, and threatening for a moment to neutralise all the efforts that had been made to assist the garrison. During the interval while the French army was waiting for the arrival of Kleber's division, a squadron of French frigates hove in sight, laden with supplies. The *Theseus* at once gave chase, and was making every exertion to bring them to action, when suddenly a huge heap of shells, which were being prepared for instant service, exploded : killed Captain Miller and forty of his men ; wounded forty-six more (many of them dangerously) ; blew

the stern of the ship to pieces, and set her on fire in several places in a way that required the utmost exertions of the surviving officers to extinguish it. The French squadron of course escaped, and landed their supplies in safety ; but even the great advantage thus gained by the enemy was not more lamented than the loss of Captain Miller, whom those of his superior officers who, like Lord St. Vincent and Nelson, had had opportunities of estimating his abilities and character, had looked upon as likely to prove one of the brightest ornaments of his profession.

From Egypt Buonaparte at the latter end of August returned to France, leaving Kleber in command of his army ; and the French forces that remained in Egypt, and on the coast, afforded our squadrons no great opportunities of gaining further distinction during the year. Sir Sidney Smith, who, on the raising of the siege of Acre, had repaired to Constantinople to plan his subsequent operations in concert with the Ministers of the Sultan, at the end of October returned to Alexandria, and, whenever he had opportunity, co-operated with the Turkish forces on land, which were harassing Kleber to a degree which made him more than once seek to secure his own return to France by negociation, but no conflict of any kind took place ; and in the Mediterranean, though every country which bordered upon it, or had any possessions within its confines, was engaged in the most deadly war, the year closed in apparent tranquillity.

But neither the operations nor the triumphs of Britain were confined to these classic waters. In the course of the summer our Government had concluded a treaty with Russia, of which one principal article stipulated for a joint attack on Holland, with the object of expelling the French army from that country, and replacing the Stadtholder in his hereditary authority. Both nations were to provide a military force ; and England was also to support the operations of the army with a powerful fleet. It need

hardly be said that we abundantly fulfilled our engagement ; but with the achievements of the army the present work is not concerned. The North Sea fleet was still under Lord Duncan, and its principal employment during the summer had been the blockade of the Dutch fleet in the Texel. But, when in the middle of August our contingent of the allied army had been successfully landed, and our troops had taken and occupied the fort of the Helder, the Admiral perceived an opportunity for dealing a more effective blow. The force under his command was beyond the power of the Dutch commander, Rear-Admiral Story, to resist ; and, even had it not been, the political dissensions which divided the whole Dutch nation had agitated the fleet also to such a degree that a large proportion of the sailors were more favourable to the views of the British Government than to those of the authorities established by the French ; were desirous, in fact, of the return of the Stadtholder, and were resolved not to fight for those who had usurped his authority. Duncan was not ignorant of the state of affairs ; and therefore, instead of forcing his way into the Texel and attacking Story, he sent in a cutter with a flag of truce, summoning him at once to surrender. It was a demand perfectly unprecedented, and, as Story was a brave and resolute man, it met with a peremptory refusal. The proud defiance of the Admiral, however, served only to show his own courage and loyalty to his employers ; it had no effect in retarding for a moment the complete success of our movement. The occupation by us of the fort of the Helder compelled the surrender of one powerful squadron ; and when, on the 30th of August, Duncan sent his second in command, Vice-Admiral Mitchell, with a sufficient portion of his fleet, further in to attack Story himself, the Dutch sailors positively refused to fight. Some hauled down the colours of their ships, some drew the charges of their guns, and threw the shot overboard. Mortified, but not dishonoured,

Story had no resource but to yield obedience to Duncan's summons, and surrender his fleet. And thus five-and-twenty sail (sixteen of them, according to the Dutch mode of rating, being line-of-battle ships, though some carried no more than forty-four guns) fell into our hands without a single shot being fired. In one way the gain to us was slight, since the captured ships were so under-sized, and so ill-built, that scarcely one of them was judged fit to be added to our navy; but it was of great value as giving to foreign nations in general a high idea of our influence, and as embarrassing the French government by showing them how little they could trust in the adherence of other countries, even of those which for many reasons might have been expected to prove most faithful to the cause of republicanism.

The actions that took place between single vessels of any size, this year, were rather fewer than usual; but among them were some that deserve a special mention. The most brilliant was one in which the *Sibylle*, 48, Captain Cooke, whose skill and gallantry have been already mentioned in the progress of this work, took the French frigate *Forte*, which was greatly superior to her in every respect, except in the number of her crew. In that particular, in consequence of many of the *Forte's* men being absent in prizes, the two vessels were on an exact equality. But the French frigate had not only four more guns than her English antagonist, but they were all of a heavier calibre: the *Sibylle's* broadside-guns were 18-pounders, the *Forte's* were 24-pounders: the *Sybillle's* carronades were 32's, the *Forte's* 36's; yet these advantages could not save her. Throughout the winter of 1798 the *Forte* had been doing such injury to our commerce in the Bay of Bengal, that in February, 1799, Captain Cooke sailed from Madras on purpose to look for her and put a stop to her triumphs. No one but her captain imagined the *Sibylle* able to contend with the French

ship, to which indeed, we had no frigate in the whole service of equal size and power ; but Captain Cooke was confident in his own skill and the bravery of his men, and, though he did not live to see his confidence justified, the result proved that it was not misplaced. After cruising about for some days without being able to obtain any information regarding the object of his search, late on the evening of the 28th of February some heavy firing at a distance attracted his attention. Having extinguished the *Sibylle's* lights, he cautiously approached the quarter from which the cannonade had proceeded, and discovered the *Forte* with two rich prizes, merchantmen from China, which she had just taken. Hoping to be able to bring all three to action, Captain Cooke kept on his way without approaching the enemy till he had gained the weather-gage, and then bore up and came to close quarters with the Frenchman soon after midnight. In the darkness the *Forte* could not discover the precise character of the vessel which was approaching her ; but she believed herself to be more than a match for any British man-of-war in those seas, and flattered herself that the *Sibylle* was some fresh victim coming unsuspectingly within her grasp. She therefore lay quiet till the *Sibylle* arrived within shot, when she fired a few guns at her, as also did one of the prizes. The *Sybillle* made no return till she had got within pistol-shot, when she poured one broadside into her stern ; and, quickly ranging up alongside, delivered a second. The *Forte*, now thoroughly undeceived as to the character of the new comer, replied vigorously ; but she was a much loftier ship than her assailant, and her guns were for the most part aimed so high as to do the *Sibylle* but little damage. One shot, indeed, had a lamentable result, inflicting as it did a mortal wound on the brave British captain ; but the whole loss his crew sustained did not exceed twenty-two men killed and wounded, and his vessel was very slightly



injured : while at the end of an hour and three-quarters, when the French ship struck, she had lost about 140 killed and wounded (her captain also being among the slain) ; her masts and bowsprits were all shot away, and she was little better than a wreck. Her prizes escaped ; but the capture of the *Forte* alone was an exploit sufficient by itself to confer great honour on the *Sibylle's* crew, and on her first-lieutenant, Mr. Hardyman, on whom after Captain Cooke's wound, the command practically devolved.

In another action, when the French *Vestale* succumbed to Captain Cunningham of the *Clyde*, the only vessel of the fleet at the Nore that had resisted the contagion of the mutinous spirit two years before, the slight disparity that existed was in our favour ; the *Clyde* carrying 38 guns to the *Vestale's* 36. Though this superiority may be well considered to have been more than neutralised by the presence of a consort of the *Vestale*, *La Sagesse*, a 20-gun corvette, which, however, through the unaccountable remissness of her captain, took no share in the conflict. The French captain fought with great courage, and also with great skill ; manœuvring his ship under fire with great precision, and great variety of resources : but the accuracy of the *Clyde's* fire was irresistible, and his ship was terribly crippled in her masts and rigging, and dangerously shattered in her hull, when, after a battle which had lasted nearly two hours, she surrendered.

One action, in which no prize was taken, deserves mention, from the superiority of the force which the French were able to employ, which manifestly required a corresponding superiority of skill in the English sailors. In April, Sir Harry Neale, in the *San Fiorenzo*, 36, with the *Amelia*, 38, Captain the Hon. C. Herbert, under his command, while cruising off Belleisle fell in with three French frigates and a large cutter. Undeterred by the inequality of the force under his command, Sir

Harry at once stood towards the enemy ; but he presently found even that force greatly crippled by a sudden squall which carried away the maintopmast, and the fore and mizen topgallantmasts of the *Amelia* ; while this disaster, being seen by the French, encouraged them also to engage. A sharp action ensued, so near the shore that the French were aided by a land-battery also : they, as was frequently the case, directed their fire principally at the rigging of our ships, and severely wounded the masts of both ; but the damage which they themselves received was so much more extensive that, after a combat of three hours, they all fled. Our ships were unable to pursue them ; but the same evening the *San Fiorenzo* took a brig coming out of the Loire, from which she learnt that one of the French frigates, the *Cornélie*, alone had suffered a loss of one hundred men killed and wounded, while those so hurt on board both our ships amounted only to thirty-eight.

Sometimes, however, the French ships also could beat off a foe of superior force. And the history of one frigate, *La Preneuse*, this year is very singular : since, when she attacked a weaker antagonist, she was herself repelled ; when assailed by a far more powerful enemy, she defended herself successfully ; and was at last unfortunate enough to fall in with and be destroyed by a force which no skill could enable her to resist. She carried forty guns, was commanded by M. L'Hermite, one of the most distinguished officers of his rank in the French navy, and had a veteran crew of three hundred men ; thus equipped, while cruising off Algoa Bay in September, she fell in with the *Camel*, a storeship, mounting twenty-four guns of inferior calibre, and the *Rattlesnake* sloop of sixteen guns. She attacked, them but, after a combat of more than six hours, she was glad to cut her cable and run from her apparently overmatched antagonists. Three weeks afterwards she was seen by the *Jupiter*, 50, Captain W.

Granger, who at once chased her and brought her to action; the French frigate was aided in no small degree by the state of the sea, which was so rough that the Jupiter was unable to open her lower-deck ports, and was forced to trust to the guns on her main-deck: a circumstance which forbids the historian to brand his countrymen's want of success as discreditable, but which may not be allowed to deprive Captain L'Hermite of the praise due to his gallant resistance. So rapid and true was his firing, that before the Jupiter, thus reduced to a single tier of guns, could do him much damage he, had crippled her rigging, and wounded her masts so severely that she was forced to draw off for a time to refit; and before she was in a condition to renew the action, he had put such a distance between La Preneuse and her, that Captain Granger saw it to be useless to pursue her. It was, however, the frigate's last cruise; before the end of the year, M. L'Hermite fell in off the Mauritius, with two British ships, the Tremendous, 74, and the Adamant, 50, and, as a contest with such a force was manifestly hopeless, he ran his ship on shore, and the boats from her two enemies went in and destroyed her without the loss of a man, in spite of the heavy fire of some French batteries under which she lay.

One capture made by our frigates may seem to claim a record, not from the difficulty of the exploit, since our force doubled that of the vanquished enemy, but from the splendour of the reward which fell to the lot of the conquerors. Late in the evening of the 15th of October, the Naiad, 38, Captain W. Pierrepont, was cruising at no great distance to the north-west of Cape Finisterre, when she saw two homeward-bound Spanish frigates, rather smaller than herself, to which she at once gave chase. Before daybreak the next morning she was joined by another 38-gun frigate, the Ethalion, Captain James Young, and, as day broke, Captain Gore in the Triton,

32, and Captain Digby in the *Alcmene*, of similar force, came up from different quarters. The Spaniards separated, but the British did the same. After some hours of vigorous pursuit, the *Ethalion* overtook the *Thetis*, and easily captured her; the *Triton* and *Alcmene* did not come up with the *Santa Brigida* till the next day, when the *Triton* very nearly met with a worse fate herself, running on the rocks of Cape Finisterre. She, however, got off again without having received much injury; and the Spanish frigate, unable to contend with two foes at once, after a short resistance struck her colours. The *Naiad*, being a worse sailer than her comrades, was unable to take an active part in either capture. The prizes proved to be loaded with gold and silver. So vast was the treasure, that, when they reached Plymouth, it required sixty-three artillery-waggons to convey it to the Citadel. The fortunate captains received above 40,000*l.* a-piece, and even the common seamen and marines got nearly 200*l.*

The exploits of smaller vessels than frigates, though often displaying eminent ability and courage in those concerned, are rarely of sufficient importance to entitle them to mention in a work which, instead of recording every achievement of our sailors, limits itself to a selection of those most remarkable. Yet, a year or two after the period of which we are now speaking, the 14-gun brig *Speedy* earned so conspicuous a renown, that a brief sketch of what she did in this year may seem not to be misplaced. She was at this time commanded by Captain Jahleel Brenton, who, while working up the Spanish coast by Cape Gata in company with the *Defender*, a privateer of the same force as the *Speedy*, fell in with three Spanish vessels mounting between them twenty guns of heavier calibre than those carried by either of the British ships. After a sharp conflict, he captured them all. Two months later, he rescued a convoy of our traders from a flotilla of

Spanish coasters, of which he destroyed two. And at the beginning of November, off Europa Point, he repelled an entire squadron of gunboats which had issued out from Algesiras on purpose to effect his capture. They were twelve in number, each carrying a twenty-four pounder, and two of them being armed with a couple. The guns of the Speedy were but four-pounders, their united crews amounted to five hundred men, while Captain Brenton had but eighty. Yet he effectually protected one or two trading-vessels which he had under his charge, and drove off the whole body of Spaniards to seek shelter under the guns of a neighbouring fort. The garrison of Gibraltar, in whose sight the action took place, asserted that four of the gunboats struck. But of this Captain Brenton does not appear to have been aware. He was promoted for his successful skill and gallantry, and was succeeded in the Speedy by Lord Cochrane. Under his command, we shall hear again of the little brig; as, in his higher rank, we shall again have to speak of her former valiant and able captain.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1800.

An unsuccessful expedition to Quiberon—Sir E. Pellew proposes to attack Belleisle, but is overruled—Continuance of the siege of Malta—Great qualities of Captain Ball—A land-force arrives under Colonel Graham—Lord Keith commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean—Nelson takes the *Généreux*—Capture of the *Guillaume Tell*—Surrender of Malta—Lord Keith co-operates with the Austrian army in the North of Italy—Loss of the *Queen Charlotte*—Blockade and reduction of Genoa—Convention of El Arish is disallowed by Lord Keith—Fruitless expeditions against Ferrol and against Cadix—Lord Cochrane in the *Speedy*—The *Viper* cuts out the *Cerbère*—Exploits of Lieutenant Burke—The *Seine* takes *La Vengeance*—Action between the *Milbrook* and *La Bellone*—Mutiny on board the *Danaë*.

THE next year Lord St. Vincent, whose health had been in some degree re-established by a winter's rest at home, succeeded Lord Bridport in the command of the Channel fleet; but no results of importance followed the change. In June the new commander sent Sir Edward Pellew with a powerful squadron of seven sail of the line and five frigates, which was accompanied by an army of 5000 men under General Maitland, to aid the French Royalists in the neighbourhood of Quiberon Bay. Except Nelson himself, there was not in the whole navy a more enterprising or able officer than Pellew: but he soon found that the Royalist feeling in that part of France had been greatly overstated; and was forced to limit his exertions to the destruction of one or two unimportant forts, and the capture of a few brigs and smaller vessels. Pellew himself would gladly have made a descent upon Belleisle, but General Maitland doubted the adequacy of his force to such an enterprise, and it was abandoned.

In the Mediterranean, throughout the winter, Nelson,

who since the departure of Lord St. Vincent and Lord Keith had been commander-in-chief, had been pressing on the siege of Malta with untiring zeal, but with means wholly inadequate. Captain Ball was the officer to whom he had entrusted the command; and there was no instance which more eminently proved his possessing that most important of all qualifications for a commanding officer, an insight into character and a just appreciation of eminent talents and virtues: for Ball was an officer of rare capacity and excellence; patient, moderate, undaunted, full of resources, and of immovable firmness, and, in the course of his protracted campaign before Malta, he found an abundant field for the exercise and display of all these qualities. Malta was then, as it still is, one of the strongest places in the world: it was garrisoned with 5000 picked French soldiers; and the whole force at Ball's disposal for its siege consisted of two, or sometimes three, line-of-battle ships, with an occasional frigate, a small and useless Portuguese squadron, and a half-disciplined band of armed peasants. Ball himself was serving on shore with a naval brigade of 500 men, drawn from the various British ships; leaving his first-lieutenant, Mr. Harrington, in command of the *Alexander*. Before the close of the year, the besieging force was strengthened by the arrival of a brigade of soldiers under Brigadier-General Graham, (celebrated at a subsequent period as the victor of Barrosa), and by the arrival of Troubridge with the *Culloden* and two more ships of the line to take the command of the blockade by sea, while Ball was serving on shore. But still the besiegers were far inferior in numbers to the besieged; and Graham, though a most enterprising officer, was forced to report to Nelson that "the force which he had at present was totally inadequate to any serious attack on the enemy's works."\* While even this scanty force, through

\* 'Nelson's Despatches,' iv. 181.

the joint mismanagement of our authorities at home and of the Neapolitan Government, was in daily want of provisions and money. Nelson actually mortgaged his domain of Bronté to find funds to keep the squadron before Malta, and at his own risk seized a number of ships laden with corn at Messina, which the Neapolitan Government refused to let him purchase, though the Maltese, for whom it was wanted, were starving.\*

At the beginning of the year, Lord Keith returned to the Mediterranean as commander-in-chief; and for a short time he came himself to Malta, and cruised with Nelson off that island. He had been there but a few days when he heard that a French squadron, laden with troops and provisions, was on its way from Toulon, in the hope of being able to relieve the garrison, which by this time was also in great distress. On receiving this intelligence, he stationed himself off the harbour in the hope of intercepting it; but Nelson, who thought there was but a doubtful prospect of success in such a plan, took advantage of a gale, which dispersed the squadron and separated him from his commander-in-chief, to bear down with one or two ships towards the African coast, which his experience had shown him was the track which the French usually adopted. His judgment was rewarded. On the 18th of February the *Alexander*, still under the command of Lieut. Harrington, fell in with the enemy's squadron, which consisted of a ship of the line, a frigate, two corvettes, and a body of transports. She and

\* Southey, who to keep up a consistency with the tale he tells about the affairs in the Bay of Naples, persists in representing Nelson as at this time infatuated by the Neapolitan Court, relates this seizure of the corn-ships as Ball's own act, resolved on "with more decision than Nelson himself would have shown at that time and upon that occasion." But Nelson writes to Troubridge January 8th, 1800, (by which time that officer was commanding at Malta), "You must, in the last extremity, seize vessels loaded with corn; the inhabitants cannot starve" ('Despatches' iv. 173); so that it is plain that the seizure was effected in obedience to Nelson's orders.



the *Success* frigate at once attacked the large ship, which, when a few minutes later Nelson himself came up in the *Foudroyant*, struck her colours, and, to his great delight, proved to be the *Généreux*, 74, one of the two ships that had escaped from the Nile. The other vessels put back and escaped ; but the *Généreux* by herself was a prize of great value. In the short engagement that had taken place, her commander, Admiral *Perée*, had been killed ; and she had on board 2000 soldiers and a vast quantity of provisions and stores of all kinds : her capture, in fact, sealed the fate of Malta, which was presently heralded by another success equally gratifying to Nelson's feelings, though not, like that of the *Généreux*, the immediate result of his own superiority of judgment. At the end of February, Lord Keith went towards Genoa, to co-operate with the Austrians in the war which they were carrying on against the French in the north of Italy ; and in the middle of March Nelson returned to Palermo, as the station where, while still exercising a superintendence over the conduct of affairs at Malta, he could give the most efficient support to the tottering government of King Ferdinand. And a few days after his withdrawal, General Vaubois, the French Governor of Malta, wishing to save the ships that had been blocked up in Valetta for a year and a half, and also to convey to his Government a correct knowledge of his situation, despatched the *Guillaume Tell* to France to announce that he could not hold out longer than June. It was wonderful, and most creditable to his reputation and that of his garrison, that they had held out so long. For some time eggs had been selling for a shilling, and rats for two shillings a-piece ; while even the sick in the hospital had no better food than broth made out of starved horses.

Late at night on the 30th of March, the French ship put to sea, hoping under cover of the darkness to escape

unperceived; but it had been known for some days that she was preparing to flee, and the whole British squadron was watching for her with unremitting vigilance. Nelson had left the *Foudroyant* behind him, under Sir Edward Berry: who had with him the *Alexander*; the *Lion*, 64, Captain Dixon; and the 36-gun frigate *Penelope*, Captain Henry Blackwood, whose names will be often mentioned in subsequent chapters of this history. The *Guillaume Tell* was scarcely outside the harbour when the *Penelope* discovered her, and though the enemy was one of the most powerful two-deckers in existence, ventured at once to engage her, rightly judging that the sound of her guns would be the speediest means of conveying intelligence to the rest of the squadron, which was some miles to leeward of the presence of the enemy and of the course which she was taking. A safe arrival in France was of so much more consequence to the *Guillaume Tell* than the capture of the *Penelope*, that her commander, Admiral Decrés, held on his way under a press of sail, contenting himself with keeping up a running fight with his antagonist: while with such admirable skill did her captain handle the British frigate, taking full advantage of the superiority of speed, which she necessarily possessed to rake his enemy with his full broadside, and yet to give her no opportunity of replying with more than her stern-chasers, that, before any of his more powerful comrades came up, he had shot away two of the Frenchman's topmasts, greatly damaged her other rigging, and disabled many of her men, with the loss of only four of his own crew. The action, such as it was, had been maintained nearly five hours, when the *Lion* arrived to bear her share in it. She too, as far as she could, imitated the example of the *Penelope*, and took up a position across the enemy's bows, to avoid exposing herself to her overpowering broadside, But so heavy were the French guns that even

the few that could be brought to bear reduced the little sixty-four to a state little better than that of a wreck. And it was well for her gallant crew that a mightier assistant was at hand, and that the *Foudroyant* at last arrived on the scene. Escape from the *Guillaume Tell* was now hopeless, for the *Foudroyant* was fresh, with her means of sailing and manœuvring unimpaired; though the number of her crew did not indeed equal those who were still unhurt in the French ship. Yet so dauntless a heart did Admiral Decrés, her commander, bear within his bosom, that even now he disdained to obey Berry's summons to surrender, and for full two hours more continued the combat with a gallantry that excited the warmest admiration of his antagonists. Not till his masts were nearly all shot away, their wreck disabling a great portion of his guns, did he haul down his colours; and then so nearly did the injuries which he had inflicted on the *Foudroyant* equal those which he had received from her, that she was too much disabled to take possession of her prize, and that honour devolved on Captain Blackwood. The three English ships had lost nearly one hundred and thirty men. The *Guillaume Tell* something more than two hundred. She was the last line-of-battle ship remaining to the French of the whole Nile fleet: a circumstance which greatly increased the exultation of her captors; while the heroic defence she had made against overwhelming odds, attracted the notice of Buonaparte, rarely magnanimous enough to be just to the unfortunate, but on this occasion sufficiently impressed with the great qualities which Admiral Decrés had displayed to treat him for the future with marked favour and confidence.

The two frigates which had escaped from the Nile were likewise at Valetta; and, before the island surrendered, they also sought safety in nocturnal flight. One found it: the *Diane* was taken by the *Success*; but the

Justice, favoured by a darkness unusual at that season of the year, avoided all conflict and escaped. She, however, only deferred her fate: from Malta she sailed to Alexandria, and, being in that harbour when the last division of the French army capitulated, she was surrendered; in the division of the spoil she fell to the share of the Turks; was ultimately added to the Sultan's navy; and her capture completed the total destruction of the Nile fleet.

Two months had elapsed beyond the time which General Vaubois had fixed as the latest period to which he could protract his resistance, and the whole force under his command had been suffering the severest privations till their strength was wholly exhausted, when at last, on the 4th of September, he consented to capitulate. Nelson had returned to England, and Captain Martin of the Northumberland was now the senior British naval officer on the station. He and Major-General Pigot, the commander of the land-force, rightly honouring the bravery and fortitude of the French, granted them the most favourable terms, calculated, as far as the respect shown to them by an enemy could have such an effect, to console them under a disaster which was no disgrace. But the French nation at large, and the remarkable man who was already in effect its ruler, was not so easily to be comforted. The importance which Buonaparte set upon our conquest is attested by the pertinacity with which, in the negotiations which subsequently ensued, he laboured to wrest it from us; at last even renewing the war in preference to leaving it in our possession. And the feeling with which his nation in general regarded it may be seen in the reference to the event made by French historians writing even after the conclusion of the war, who do not hesitate to call it the most bitter fruit of the destruction of their Nile fleet.\*

Mean time the squadron which Lord Keith retained

\* "La capitulation de Malte fut pour France le fruit le plus amer de la défaite de sa flotte à Aboukir. Elle ne perdit pas seulement les avantages

under his personal command assisted at a conquest which would have been almost as important as that of Malta, had it been possible to preserve the acquisition. Massena, with the exception of Buonaparte himself, was perhaps the ablest of all the great generals whom the Revolution had brought forth ; and he now, after an arduous campaign, was cooped up by the Austrian generals within the walls of Genoa. It was not easy to overrate the value of the city to either of the combatants : but it was plain that, without the co-operation of a British fleet to blockade it by sea, the Austrians could have no prospect of finally reducing it. Thither, therefore, Lord Keith repaired ; but as he was on his way, his force was diminished by a calamitous accident. He was himself on shore at Leghorn, where he had landed to obtain more precise information of the state of affairs in that quarter of Italy, and had sent his flagship, the *Queen Charlotte*, to reconnoitre the island of Capraja, which he had some thoughts of attacking, when, at sunrise on the morning of the 17th of March, the ship was discovered to be on fire. The flames rapidly got such a head that all efforts to extinguish them were fruitless. The ship's company had not previously borne a very good character for subordination and discipline ; but nothing could have been more admirable than their conduct when in the face of this, the most awful of all the dangers to which sailors are exposed. Captain Todd, and the first-lieutenant, Mr. Bainbridge, set a noble example of energy and self-devotion ; exerting themselves to the utmost, while hope remained, to save the vessel, and when all hope was gone,

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d'un beau port protégé par une forteresse inexpugnable, au centre de la Méditerranée ; d'un appui pour ses croisières sur le passage le plus fréquenté ; d'un refuge pour sa marine militaire et marchande : mais elle dut gémir, elle devra regretter longtemps que cette funeste conquête, passant sous la domination les Anglais, ait détruit la prépondérance, la sécurité de son commerce, et par conséquent les éléments de sa puissance maintenue dans les mers du Levant,"

— *Victoires et Conquêtes des Français*, xiii. 144.

labouring with equal zeal to save the crew, without giving a thought to their own safety. They both perished in the ship, as did more than four-fifths of the crew.

This great disaster, however, was not allowed to delay our operations. By the middle of April Lord Keith had completed the blockade of Genoa by sea. At the same time he despatched a small squadron under Captain Donovan of the *Santa Dorotea*, 36, to aid in a similar manner in the reduction of Savona. That town soon fell; but Massena's indomitable resolution held out Genoa till the 4th of June. The British fleet had bombarded the city more than once; and on one occasion a fierce conflict occurred between the boats and bombvessels employed on this service and a flotilla of gunboats which the French fitted out to meet them as they advanced. They placed especial reliance on a galley of great size and speed, manned by a crew of above two hundred and fifty picked fighting-men, as well as three hundred galley-slaves, employed as rowers, and armed with two long 36-lb. guns, besides others of smaller calibre; but Captain Beaver, of the *Aurora*, to whom the conduct of an attack on her had been entrusted, carried her by boarding, though she was moored by strong chains to the Mole; and the rest of the flotilla, disheartened by her loss, made no further attempt to do more than save themselves. At last, on the 4th of June, Massena surrendered; but only ten days afterwards Buonaparte gave the Austrians a decisive overthrow at Marengo, which led to the re-occupation of Genoa, Savona, and indeed of every other place which was thought worth seizing by the conqueror. And during the remainder of the year no events of naval importance took place in the western portion of the Mediterranean.

Nor, indeed, as far as any warlike exploits of brilliancy performed by our ships or our sailors are concerned, was the Levant more prolific of materials for the historian, though some singular occurrences took place which must

not be entirely passed over. At the close of the year 1799 the French General, Kleber, finding himself hemmed in on all sides, became eager to escape from Egypt by negotiation. The Turkish Government, anxious that he should at all events quit their territory, was equally willing to negotiate ; and Sir Sidney Smith, full of his unfortunate notion of his own diplomatic abilities, allowed the commissioners on each side to meet on board his ship. At the beginning of this year they concluded a convention, subsequently known as that of El Arish, from the name of a fort on shore in which it was signed, by which it was agreed that the French army should evacuate Egypt, and be allowed to return without molestation to their own country. Sir Sidney Smith withheld his own signature from this convention, probably in consequence of the peremptory notice which he had received from Nelson that, under no circumstances, would he agree to a single Frenchman quitting the country except as a prisoner ; but he was present at its conclusion, on the 24th of January, and it was understood by both the French and Turks that he approved of it, and was desirous to facilitate its execution ; and he actually did sign a document which virtually bound him as much as the more formal treaty. Lord Keith, too, in his secret opinion, was not unfavourable to such an agreement ; but, about three weeks before this convention was signed, he received a positive order from his Government to consent to no such measure, of which he sent instant notice both to the British Commodore and the French General. Kleber, full of indignation, or rather considering that a pretended indignation at Lord Keith's language (which certainly implied that he had no alternative but to surrender) would rekindle the enthusiasm of his troops, who were greatly dispirited by a succession of reverses, and by the departure of Buonaparte, declared that the only answer to be given to such a letter was the renewal of the war, attacked the Turkish army, and gave it

such a defeat that the necessity for his abandonment of the country seemed to be removed ; but it deserves to be mentioned that the British Government, having received some inaccurate information which led to a belief that the convention had been in part executed by the enemy, though strongly blaming Sir Sidney for having sanctioned such an agreement without any authority, nevertheless sent out a fresh order that the terms of the convention should be scrupulously observed.\* Before this second order arrived, however, the renewal of hostilities by Kleber had wholly altered the state of affairs, and had rendered it impossible any longer to act upon the convention, even had the French desired to adhere to it.

Both the Mediterranean fleet and a squadron from the Channel fleet threatened the Spanish coast before the close of the year; but in each case the demonstrations made were barren of important results. Sir John Warren, with a squadron of five sail of the line, having on board a body of nearly four thousand troops under Lieutenant-General Sir James Pulteney, was sent at the latter end of August to attack Ferrol. The ships silenced a battery on shore, and landed the troops; but when Sir James had driven a Spanish division from the heights that overlook the town, and was in consequence able to reconnoitre its defences minutely,

\* The exact language of this second order is given in 'Nelson's Despatches,' iv. 216, note, and is especially deserving of remark as laying down the identical principle on which Nelson had acted in ratifying the capitulation concluded with the garrison at Castel à Mare, as well as in annulling that entered into with those who held the Castles dell' Uovo and Nuovo. The second order says, "And as a part of the treaty was to be immediately executed by the enemy, so that by annulling this transaction (in as far as His Majesty's officer was a party thereto), the enemy could not be replaced in the same situation in which he before stood," &c. It is plain, therefore, that, if the enemy could have been replaced in such a situation, the British Government would have had no scruple in refusing to act upon the convention; and in the case of Castel Nuovo and dell' Uovo it was notorious that the garrisons had not begun to execute the treaty which Captain Foote had signed; but that on Nelson's arrival they were still in the same position as before the conclusion of the capitulation.



he considered them too strong for the force he had with him to attack with any reasonable probability of success. He therefore re-embarked his troops ; and the sole visible fruit of this expedition was a French 18-gun privateer lying in Vigo Bay, which Lieutenant Burke of the *Renown*, Sir John Warren's flagship, most gallantly cut out and brought off, in spite of a determined resistance on the part of her own crew, who did not surrender till they had lost sixty-five men ; and of a heavy fire from the batteries on shore, under whose protection she was lying. The second expedition was on a far larger scale, but was baffled by a foe with which no gallantry can contend. A large fleet was known to be fitting out at Cadiz ; and circumstances appeared to indicate the possibility of capturing not only the ships, but the town itself ; the importance of which, as the chief arsenal of Spain, could not have been overestimated. The Spaniards had no suspicion of any such enterprise being in contemplation when, at the beginning of October, Lord Keith appeared before the town with his whole fleet, consisting of twenty-two sail of the line, upwards of thirty frigates and smaller vessels, and a vast flotilla of transports conveying an army of eighteen thousand men, under Sir R. Abercromby. The two commanders summoned the town to surrender ; and though the Governor was a brave man, it is doubtful whether he could have offered an effectual resistance to so unexpected an attack, had he not been able to add to the defiance with which he replied to the summons, the information that the yellow fever was raging in the town and garrison. In such a state of affairs victory would have been more calamitous than defeat. Without striking a blow, the fleet returned to Gibraltar ; and not long afterwards the army sailed on another expedition ; its success in which was a sufficient proof of what might have been expected from it in Spain, had not a mightier foe than man forbidden it to try its arms in that country.

The dread of pestilence, though not always equally well founded, was at times a protection to us as well as to our enemies. An officer who was rapidly rising to high renown in his profession, Lord Cochrane, had in the spring obtained his promotion as Commander, and his appointment to the *Speedy*. She had, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, already made her name known under the command of Captain Brenton; and she was not likely to lower her reputation under her new commander. Though her guns were only four-pounders, she soon, in his hands, became the terror of the coasts of the western part of the Mediterranean, which was her cruising ground; and made so many prizes that at last the Spaniards thought it worth while to send out a frigate to look for her. On the 21st of December she was searching the creeks of the coast of Catalonia, when she descried a large vessel which she imagined to be a richly-laden merchantman: but it was not till she had got almost alongside that the stranger opened her ports, and showed them bristling with guns, a contest with which, or escape from which, seemed equally impossible. Lord Cochrane had previously painted the *Speedy* in imitation of a Danish brig known to be on the coast; and he had also shipped a Danish quartermaster, in a Danish uniform. He now hoisted the Danish flag, with the yellow quarantine-flag to back it; and, when the Spanish Captain sent a boat to hail him, he made the Dane reply that the vessel was only two days from Algiers, where the plague was raging. The Spanish Captain had as little inclination to catch the plague as Lord Keith, and left the *Speedy* to herself, to continue a series of achievements, which of their kind have probably no parallel in the history of any other navy, nor even in that of our own.

The *Speedy* was not the only vessel that distinguished herself in this manner. The commander of another 14-gun sloop, the *Viper*, Lieutenant Coghlan, earned great praise

by an exploit almost as daring as any performed by Lord Cochrane ; with three small boats cutting out the *Cerbère*, a brig armed with seven heavy guns, and a crew of eighty-seven men, though she was moored in Port Louis, close under the batteries, and though a French ship of the line and a frigate were within a mile of her. He himself, heading the boarders, leapt in the dark into a trawl-net which was hanging up to dry, and while thus caught and helpless he was severely wounded by a pike, and knocked back into his boat ; but he returned to the charge, and, after a stubborn conflict, mastered the enemy and carried her off. So brilliant was his exploit considered that though he was only serving under an acting order, and wanted a year and a-half of his proper time, he was confirmed in his rank by a special Order in Council, while the officers of the squadron to which he belonged unanimously gave up the prize to the gallant men who had actually captured her.

This year was particularly rich in boat-expeditions of this kind ; the officer who was most conspicuous for such services being the same Lieutenant Burke whom we have already mentioned as capturing a French privateer at Vigo. Earlier in the summer he thrice distinguished himself in command of the boats of the *Renown*, and the other ships comprising Sir John Warren's squadron. On the night of the 10th of June, while the squadron was cruising off the Penmarck Rocks, with eight boats he went into the little harbour of St. Croix, and though he was soon discovered and exposed to a heavy fire from a battery on shore, and to the musketry of one or two companies of soldiers, who came down to the water's edge to protect their countrymen, he succeeded in carrying off three heavily-armed gunboats, and eight trading vessels freighted with supplies for the fleet lying in Brest. A fortnight afterwards, he landed at the head of a body of marines, stormed and destroyed three batteries at the mouth of

the Quimper, and regained his ship without the loss of a man. And a week later, with the boats of the two seventy-fours, the Renown and the Defence, and those of the Fisgard frigate, and 192 men, he attacked a squadron lying in fancied security behind the Isle of Noirmoutier. The shore bristled with batteries wherever it was possible to place a gun ; yet in spite of all opposition he boarded and captured the *Terèse*, 20, a 12-gun lugger, three smaller vessels carrying six guns each, and fifteen merchantmen richly laden with provisions and naval stores of all kinds. He had not hands enough to bring them off, so he destroyed them all, and prepared to return to his ship ; but now Fortune deserted him. The tide had been ebbing fast while he was thus engaged, and as he was retiring by the same line by which he had advanced, his boats grounded immoveably on the sandbanks, where the batteries and 400 French soldiers kept up a continued fire upon them. Still undaunted, Burke led his men against some other vessels which he saw at a small distance, with the view of effecting his escape in one of them. Presently he himself, with nearly half his comrades, was surrounded and taken prisoner ; but the rest mastered a vessel, and, though she too was aground, they dragged her into deep water, beat off the French who tried to stop them, and regained their ships. The apparent lustre of the exploit was dimmed by the loss of ninety-two men, who fell into the enemy's hands ; but, if the magnitude of the injury inflicted on the French and the greatness of the obstacles which opposed themselves to the success of the enterprise be taken into consideration, it may fairly be said that few more gallant actions have ever been performed.

One capture of a French frigate deserves especially to be recorded, because, not long before, the very ship that thus yielded to our arms had beaten off the American frigate *Constellation*. In August *La Vengeance*, no-

minally a 40-gun ship, but in reality carrying fifty-two guns, on her way from Curaçoa to France, fell in with the English frigate *Seine*, rated at thirty-eight guns, but armed with forty-eight. The weight of metal was rather more in favour of the Frenchman than the number of guns; as also was the difference in the crews, the complement of *La Vengeance* being three hundred and twenty-six men, that of the *Seine* two hundred and eighty-one. Altogether the French vessel was about one-eighth stronger than her antagonist; but Captain Milne, the commander of the English ship, took no account of so trifling a disproportion; while the French captain was not willing to engage without greater odds in his favour. And the result proved his judgment correct. As soon as the two ships came in sight of one another, *La Vengeance* hoisted more canvas, and kept in her former track. The *Seine* crowded all sail in pursuit. The chase lasted an entire day before she got within gunshot of her enemy; and at first the stern-chasers of *La Vengeance*, which were truly aimed, did great damage to her rigging before she was able to inflict any adequate retaliation; but, when night came on, she repaired her damages, and, by great exertion on the part of her crew, the next morning got fairly alongside her opponent. Then a fierce struggle commenced. The French crew again displayed all the courage which had previously enabled them to beat off the American; but their fire was less true and effective than ours. At the end of two hours and a half *La Vengeance* was almost wholly dismasted, and had lost above a third of her crew killed or wounded, while those who had fallen on our side did not exceed forty men. She had no choice but to surrender; and Captain Milne conducted her in triumph to Jamaica, the best proof of how well she had been defended being to be found in the fact that, though she was purchased for our navy, it was found impossible

so to repair her as to render her fit for service ; and she never quitted Port Royal Harbour.

One action that took place this year excited considerable attention at the time, from the light which it appeared to throw upon a system that had lately been invented of fitting carronades in such a manner that there was no recoil. The chief advantage expected to be derived from this invention was, that under it the guns would be reloaded with far greater rapidity ; the chief counter-vailing disadvantage which was alleged against it was, that guns so fitted could only be reloaded outside the ship, and that consequently the men employed in this task would be terribly exposed. Among the vessels thus armed was the schooner Milbrook, which was furnished with sixteen eighteen-pounders, and whose commander, Lieutenant M. Smith, had the greatest confidence in the new plan. He had soon an opportunity of testing it ; for he had not been many days at sea, when off the mouth of the Douro he perceived a frigate which, when he neared her, he discovered to be the 32-gun privateer Bellone, from Bordeaux, whose deeds had for some time made her the dread of all our merchantmen whose path lay across the Bay of Biscay. Her armament consisted of twenty-four 8-pounders, and eight 36-pounder carronades, so that she was more than half as strong again as the Milbrook ; nevertheless Lieutenant Smith did not hesitate to bear down upon her, and bring her to action. The expectations which he founded on the new equipment of his guns were in a great degree realised. He found that he could fire eleven broadsides while the frigate fired three, and after a time he actually compelled her to strike. His own vessel, however, was terribly crippled ; her masts were tottering, and her boats were shot to pieces, so that he was wholly unable to take possession of his prize, which, seeing his disabled state, presently rehoisted her colours, and, having contrived to get up a little sail,

got away. She had, however, lost twenty men killed, and forty-seven wounded: these latter, alone, equalling in number the whole crew of the Millbrook. Another schooner, the Netley, commanded by Lieutenant F. G. Bond, was equipped in the same manner as the Millbrook, and she also was very successful, taking several prizes from the Spaniards; but, though the performances of these two vessels for a while caused the system on which they were armed to be looked on with some degree of favour, the objections to it were commonly deemed to outweigh its advantages, and it never met with any general adoption.

It would be well if these achievements, or those of similar character, were the most remarkable events in the naval history of the year; but full of enterprise and glory, as for the most part it was, its annals were sullied by one foul act of treason, resembling a crime committed three years before in the West Indies, of which we have already recorded the temporary success and the punishment. On board the *Danaë*, a 20-gun brig, commanded by Lord Proby, a man named Jackson had been shipped as a petty officer, who had borne an active part in the mutiny at the Nore, where he had been greatly in Parker's confidence, and at one time had acted as his secretary. It would seem that when he was thus entered in the *Danaë* his identity with the mutineer was not suspected. He soon began to tamper with the crew, and in the middle of March, when the vessel was cruising off Brest, he prevailed on a portion of them to join him in mutiny. Beginning their operations late in the evening, he and his followers succeeded in surprising and overpowering the rest of the crew and the officers, most of whom were in bed; and though Lord Proby himself was up, and prepared at once to assert his authority, he found the hatchways battened down, so that he was unable to force his way to the deck. A considerable body of the crew remained true to their duty, but,

like the Captain, they were all kept below ; and the mutineers had possession of the deck, and, consequently, the sole power of navigating the ship. The wind too, which had previously blown off the shore, changed the next morning, and enabled them to steer her into Camaret Bay, where they surrendered her to the *Colombe*, a French brig of inferior force to her own. The *Colombe*, having sent a body of soldiers on board, conducted her prize to Brest. On their way they fell in with two British frigates, who at first pursued them ; but Jackson, by a cunning use of signals, led them to believe that the *Danaë* was in chase of an inferior enemy, on which they left her to herself. She reached Brest in safety ; but Jackson and the wretches whom he had deluded were greatly surprised at the treatment which they received, than which no event in the whole war reflects greater credit on the French. The authorities at Brest treated Lord Proby and his officers with marked honour and kindness, and threw the traitorous mutineers into prison.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

1801.

**The Northern Confederacy—Arrogance of the Emperor Paul—A British fleet is sent to the Baltic under Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson as second in command—Sir Hyde's slowness—Time is wasted in negotiations—Nelson's advice—The fleet arrives off Copenhagen—Nelson's energy—He conducts the attack on Copenhagen—Destruction of the Danish defences—His letter to the Crown Prince—He lands to negotiate with the Crown Prince—An armistice is agreed upon—The fleet goes to Carlsrona—Nelson's activity—Murder of Paul—The fleet returns to Copenhagen—Nelson succeeds Sir Hyde as Commander-in-chief—Goes to Revel—Russia shows a peaceful disposition—Nelson resigns the command through ill-health—Buonaparte's efforts for the relief of the army in Egypt—Admiral Gantheaume is despatched with a fleet and a reinforcement—Is chased by Sir J. Warren—Reaches Egypt, and is driven back by Lord Keith—Takes the Swiftsure—Services of our gunboats, &c., in Egypt—Recovery of Cairo and Alexandria—The French fail at Elba to reduce Porto Ferrajo—Admiral Linois beats off Sir J. Saumarez at Algeiras, and takes the Hannibal—Saumarez refits his squadron, and attacks and defeats a superior French and Spanish force—Flotilla of invasion at Boulogne—Nelson's operations against it.**

THE year 1801 furnished a sort of episode in the main contest between Great Britain and France, in a little war between us and the nations bordering on the Baltic, which, like that into which the French had led the Dutch, terminated in the humiliation and prostration of their new allies, without being productive of the slightest advantage to themselves. The right of searching the vessels of neutral Powers for goods belonging to our enemies had at all times been claimed by our cruisers; and, though occasionally disputed, it had been formally admitted in more than one treaty. Its exercise, however, had given rise to constant heartburnings and frequent misunderstandings; and the Danes, who, as one of the few nations

which could plead a neutrality between the belligerents, had of late greatly extended their carrying trade, had more than once in the last year or two protested against a claim the exercise of which greatly diminished the profits which they might have looked for had their neutral flag been allowed to cover the property of our enemies ; and on one occasion in the past summer, the captain of one of their frigates, the *Frega*, had formally refused to allow a convoy under her escort to be searched, and had been captured for his refusal. So great was the indignation felt in Denmark at this occurrence, that our Ministry judged it necessary to send an ambassador, Lord Whitworth, to Copenhagen, accompanied by a squadron of such force as should secure a favorable hearing for his arguments. The dispute for the moment was amicably adjusted ; but what the Danes did not resent, the Russian Emperor resented for them ; he claimed to be in some sort protector of the Baltic, and, pretending to look upon the entrance of a British fleet into that sea as an insult to himself, he laid an embargo on all the British vessels in his harbours, and treated their crews with great barbarity. He followed up this violent measure by a succession of edicts directed against the British merchants in his dominions. We of course prepared to retaliate ; and Buonaparte, eagerly seizing so favorable an opportunity of stimulating Paul's enmity against us, despatched agents to the North, who worked so skilfully and effectually on the different Courts, that, in the middle of December, 1800, Russia, Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden entered into a confederacy, having for its object a limitation of the right of search by such restrictions and exceptions as should in effect render it inoperative. Pitt, who fortunately was still at the head of affairs in England, at once treated the formation of this confederacy as a declaration of war, laid an embargo on all vessels belonging to the different nations which were parties to it, and gave orders for the instant equipment of a fleet

which should, as he hoped, crush the Confederacy in the bud. Sir Hyde Parker was appointed commander-in-chief of the expedition, with Nelson and Rear-Admiral Graves as second and third in command. The profession and the nation were astonished and indignant at any officer being placed over Nelson. Had he been at the head of the expedition, it would have accomplished its objects with greater rapidity, and many valuable lives, both English and Danish, would have been saved, as the fleet would have reached Copenhagen before the Danes had had time to complete their defences. And, even without considering the greatness of his former exploits, it was the more singular that any one else should have been chosen for the command on this occasion, because he, probably alone of all the flag-officers in the service, had a personal knowledge of the Danish coast and waters, having passed a winter there twenty years before, when a young post-captain in command of the *Albemarle*. Nelson was wont to say that in war time was everything; that five minutes might make the difference between a victory and a defeat; and a close observer of his conduct in this campaign has recorded with admiration the diligence with which, even when extremely ill, he took care never to be behindhand, and never to lose a minute.\* But Sir Hyde Parker, though a brave man, and an experienced seaman, had no such notions of the necessity of promptitude in action. He was appointed to the command on the 15th of January, and it was the 12th of March before the fleet quitted Yarmouth Roads.† Mr. Vansittart, afterwards Lord

\* 'Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart's Narrative,' quoted by Sir H. Nicholas ('Nelson's Despatches,' iv. 386).

† The following were the ships that composed the fleet. Those marked (‡) did not join it till after it quitted Yarmouth:—

98	{	The London . .	{	Admiral Sir Hyde Parker.
				Captain Domett.
	{	St. George . .	{	Captain R. Otway.
				Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson.
				Captain T. M. Hardy.

Bexley, accompanied the fleet as a plenipotentiary, being sent apparently from some vague hope that a successful negotiation, when backed by the sight of such a fleet, might even yet render the actual exertion of force unnecessary; and Lieut.-Col. W. Stewart was also joined in the expedition as commander of a few hundred soldiers, in the event of the course of operations opening a way for the employment of such a force on shore; but the services of the fleet were all-sufficient, and the sole advantage derived from the presence of Colonel Stewart was, that it enabled him as an eyewitness, to draw up an admirable narrative of the campaign, to which all subsequent historians have been principally indebted.

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74	{	† Defiance . . .	{ Rear-Admiral Graves.
			{ Captain Retalick.
		† Zealous . . .	{ Rear-Admiral Totty.
			{ Captain S. H. Linzee.
		† Edgar . . .	Captain Murray.
		† Elephant . . .	Captain Foley.
		† Vengeance . . .	Captain Duff.
		† Brunswick . . .	Captain Stephens.
		Bellona . . .	Captain Sir T. B. Thompson.
		Defence . . .	Captain Lord H. Paulet.
64	{	Ganges . . .	Captain Fremantle.
		Monarch . . .	Captain Mosse.
		Ramilies . . .	Captain Dixon.
		Russell . . .	Captain Cuming.
		Saturn . . .	Captain Lambert.
		Warrior . . .	Captain C. Tyler.
		Ardent . . .	Captain T. Bertie.
		Agamemnon . . .	Captain Fancourt.
		Polyphemus . . .	Captain Lawford.
		Raisnable . . .	Captain Dilkes.
51	{	Veteran . . .	Captain Dickson.
		Glutton . . .	Captain Bligh.
55		Isis . . .	Captain Walker.

## FRIGATES.

40	Désirée . . .	Captain Inman.
38	Amazon . . .	Captain Riou.
36	Blanche . . .	Captain G. Hammond.
32	Alcmene . . .	Captain Sutton.
30	Dart . . .	Captain Devonshire.
24	Jamaica . . .	Captain Rose.

Besides nineteen smaller vessels classed as sloops, gunbrigs, &c., seven bombvessels, and two fireships.--'Nelson Despatches,' iv. 294.

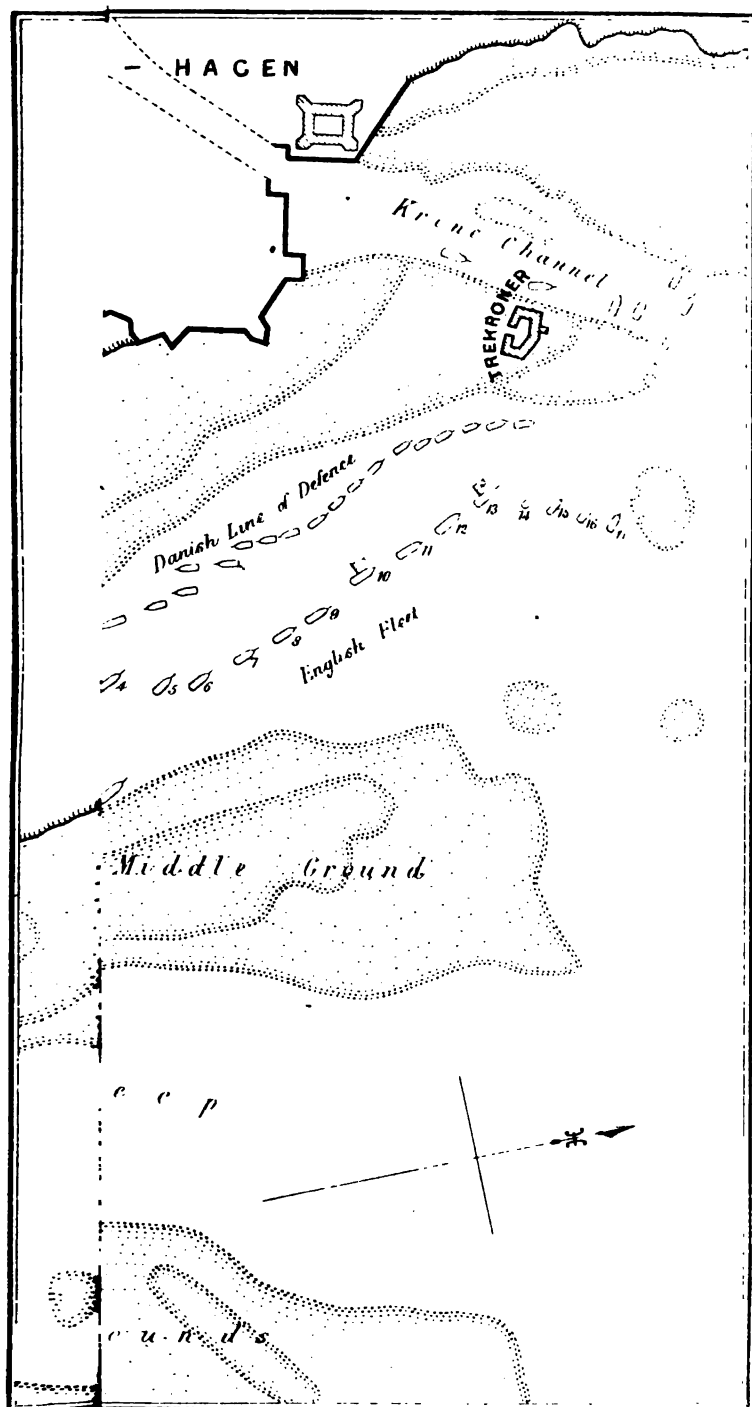
Sir Hyde was nominally the the Commander-in-chief, but, as in all cases where Nelson was employed, it was by him that everything was done. When the fleet arrived off the Skaw, the northern promontory of Jutland, Mr. Vansittart quitted it to proceed with a flag of truce to Copenhagen; but in two or three days he returned, reporting the disposition of the Danish Government to be bitterly and immoveably hostile to us, and the state of their preparation for hostilities to exceed by far the highest estimate that had been formed in England of their power. An instant attack was manifestly desirable, since it was plain that every hour allowed to them would be spent in strengthening their defences. Yet even now, when there was no longer a hope of obtaining our objects without a battle, whole days were wasted in indecision and inaction. In a long conference with the Admiral and the Minister, Nelson urged the necessity of instant action; and, resolved to put his opinions on record, he the next day,\* embodied them in a masterly letter, seeking to stimulate Sir Hyde by the argument that he had, if not the very safety, at least "the honour of England more entrusted to him than ever yet fell to the lot of any British officer." Some of the most formidable obstacles in the way of the enterprise arose from the difficulties of the navigation among the islands, on one of which Copenhagen stands, and from the extreme narrowness of the entrance to the Sound. There was another channel, by what may be called the back of the island, known as the Belt. The road by the Sound was the shortest, but that by the Belt, being less guarded, was the safest; and on this account the pilots, who were mostly mates of vessels trading between our own northern ports and the Baltic, strongly recommended it. Nelson thought it almost a matter of indifference which channel was chosen, as long as the choice was made and acted on without delay; and pro-

\* March 24.

posed, if the advance by the Belt was adopted, to divide the fleet, and send one squadron to attack the Russians at Revel, while the other assailed Copenhagen. This measure, he allowed, "might be thought bold; but the boldest measures were the safest." This was hardly Sir Hyde's opinion. The more he was pressed for instant action, the more irresolute he grew. Two days more elapsed before the fleet moved. Then it started for the Belt; but presently the plan was changed, and it turned back again to proceed by the Sound. Even then another day was wasted in sending a messenger to Cronenburg, a castle close to Elsinore, where strongly-fortified batteries command the narrowest part of the channel, to inquire whether the Governor would fire at the fleet. There could be no doubt of the answer which such a question would receive. But it was not till the Governor had replied that, though he had no express orders on this subject, he could not permit a fleet whose appearance was so hostile to pass without trying to prevent it, that at last the order was given to proceed; and the grand fleet prepared to force its way where, till that day, the ships of every nation, Britain not excepted, had paid willing homage to Denmark as the guardian of the Baltic. It was an impressive as well as a proud sight for an Englishman: for a Dane, the spectacle was calculated to raise in his breast not only awe but indignation. Such a passage was in itself an announcement of instant war; and the oldest man in the country had never seen a shot fired in anger against his Sovereign.

Opposite to Cronenburg, on the mainland of Sweden, is the city of Helsinburg; and as the Swedes, though parties to the Confederacy, did not seem inclined to offer any obstacles to our advance, the fleet kept in close to their shore, and thus avoided the fire of the Danish batteries, which opened upon it as it passed, without doing the slightest damage. Our ships at first replied to their fire,

and it is said that some of our shells reached the castle and did some little injury ; but the cannonade on both sides was soon discontinued, and the British armament passed on in silence to its destination. By noon on the 30th of March the whole fleet was safely anchored a few miles above Copenhagen, and the three Admirals, with Colonel Stewart and one or two other officers, proceeded in one of the smaller vessels to reconnoitre the harbour. They found the defences most formidable. A series of line-of-battle ships, frigates, floating batteries, and heavily-armed hulks lined the shore ; the Trekroner, or Crown Battery, constructed on two small islands in front of the city, had been equipped with upwards of eighty heavy guns ; the entire line of the defences covered a space nearly four miles in length ; while the navigation of the Channel, always intricate, had been rendered unusually difficult by the care with which the Danes had removed all the buoys. At night the boats of the fleet sounded a large portion of the channel and laid down fresh buoys ; and the next day the Commanders made a second reconnaissance ; after which they returned to the flagship, and Sir Hyde held a Council of War. Nelson, who had previously shifted his flag to the Elephant, commanded by Captain Foley, because she was a smaller and lighter ship than the St. George, offered to lead the attack, demanding for that service ten sail of the line and all the frigates. Sir Hyde gladly accepted his offer, and gave him two more ships than he asked. The next night the sounding of the channel was renewed, this time under the personal superintendence of Nelson himself, who, though very ill, passed the whole night in a boat, that he might ensure everything being done properly, for he had already learned to place but little confidence in the pilots. The next day the squadron moved nearer to the city, anchoring for the night off the north-western end of a







large shoal known as the Middle Ground, extending in front of the whole line of the Danish defences ; Nelson's plan being to pass along its outer side, to round it, and then to work in, up what was called the King's Channel, between the interior edge of the shoal and the batteries to be attacked. In the afternoon he went on board the *Amazon* frigate, for whose captain, Riou, he had conceived an especial admiration ; and in her he repeated his personal examination of the enemy's position, and then moved his attacking squadron two or three miles nearer the entrance of the King's Channel. At night he sent out some of his boats once more to sound the channel by which he was to advance to the attack ; and Captain Hardy, under whose direction they were, ventured even to carry his examination round the nearest ship of the enemy's line, making his soundings with a pole, lest the noise of heaving the lead should lead to a discovery of his occupation. Nelson himself was not in the boats this night. He had assembled the chief officers of the squadron at supper ; and, having already made the signal to prepare for action, was in high spirits ; giving them as a toast, "A fair wind and success to-morrow," he dismissed them at an early hour to strengthen themselves for their impending exertions by timely rest. For his own rest, though he had been working harder than any of them, he had less regard. He was aware how stern a conflict was before him, and he now applied himself to draw up minute instructions for its conduct, marking the place and strength of each vessel or battery of the enemy, and the position which he intended each of his own ships to occupy, with the most careful precision ; the time at which they should open their fire, and their subsequent movements, according to his calculation of the progress likely to be made. The *Désirée*, the heaviest of the frigates, he took into the line of battle, uniting her with the *Agamemnon* and *Isis* in the attack of the two first or southernmost batteries of the enemy.

The rest of the frigates, with one or two of the smaller vessels and the fireships, he placed under the command of Riou, to whom he gave a certain degree of discretionary power to act as might be required by any unforeseen emergency. While framing these instructions he became so exhausted that those about him, Foley and Riou were acting as his chief assistants, entreated him to go to his cot. He so far consented that it was laid on the floor, but still he would not try to sleep; as he lay in it, he continued dictating his orders; and, even when they had been completed and given to the clerks to copy, he was continually waking up to hurry the writers with their work, and to inquire into the state of the wind. Before six he was up and dressed, summoned his captains once more around him, to give each his instructions; and then, having dismissed them to their ships, he sent for the pilots. His patience was sorely tried by their hesitation and timidity. Long afterwards he spoke of the misery he had experienced at having "the honour of his country entrusted to a set of men who had no other thought than to keep the ships clear of danger and their own silly heads clear of shot." At length, however, the exact line of advance was finally decided on; but even now the pilots misconceived the depth of water so entirely that they refused to take the ships within a less distance than a cable's length from the Danish batteries; though it was afterwards ascertained that Captain Hardy was correct in asserting that the water deepened up to the very side of their line.

At half-past nine the Elephant made the signal to weigh in succession. The wind was due fair for the ships the moment they were clear of the shoal; and the Edgar had the proud distinction of leading the way. The Agamemnon came next; but, keeping too close, she was unable to weather the end of the shoal, and was consequently unable to proceed. The Polyphemus was signalled to take her place, and this change in the original order of sailing was

executed with extraordinary promptitude; but the absence of her intended second left the *Edgar* unsupported for some time, during which she was assailed with a heavy fire by the enemy, to which she made no reply till she reached her appointed station. Next came the *Isis*; then the *Bellona* and the *Russell*; but these two grounded on the shoal, opposite the rear of the Danish line, where, though not wholly out of gunshot, they were of comparatively little use. The *Elephant* followed, and to Nelson's own presence of mind it was owing that the accident which had befallen those ships did not prove fatal to the success of the day. Each ship had been ordered to pass her leader on the starboard side, the side nearest the shoal, and furthest from the mainland; and Nelson, having no suspicion that these ships were aground, but thinking that they were leaving him but little room to pass, as he came up, signalled to them to bear down closer towards the enemy. The signal was inevitably disregarded; on which he, still without any suspicion of the cause, at once changed his own line, and passed them on the larboard side; the ships behind followed his example, and consequently all arrived safely at their appointed stations, forming a compact line, with a space of about a hundred yards between each ship; and at a distance of two hundred yards from the enemy. As each took her place she anchored by the stern and opened her fire, and soon the battle became general. Owing to the absence of the *Agamemnon*, *Bellona*, and *Russell* from the stations which had been designed for them, our line failed to reach the end of the Danish defences, and the great *Trekroner* seemed likely to be left without an opponent. Seeing this, *Riou* gallantly undertook to attack it with his frigates, and brought them in front of it in a manner that called forth the admiration of the whole fleet; for, while the fire of the Danes was everywhere terrible, it was in no part so heavy as there, where the attacking force was so obviously unequal to its task. The *Désirée* had a still

more arduous post. The accident which had happened to the *Agamemnon* had left her almost unaided to attack the *Provestein*, a ship carrying fifty-eight heavy guns; but her captain, Inman, placed her with such judgment that, to use Nelson's own language in speaking of her achievements, "she lost not a man, but cut the *Provestein*, a ship carrying 36- and 24-pounders, to pieces." On both sides the cannonade was kept up with a fury, and a deadly precision that had never been exceeded; it had been commenced soon after ten, and in little more than an hour every ship and battery was fully engaged: yet at one o'clock no impression seemed to have been made on either side. Meantime Sir Hyde with the rest of the fleet had worked up towards the end of the shoal opposite to that by which Nelson had entered the channel; the wind of course was in his teeth, so that he could not get near enough to help his comrades, nor even to see distinctly what was going on, though he was quite near enough to hear the ceaseless roar of the guns, and to infer from it the stubbornness of the enemy's resistance, which his anxiety for his friends led him even to exaggerate. He began to fear that even Nelson must fail to overpower so undaunted a resistance, and, generously anxious to share with him the responsibility of failure, he made a signal to discontinue the action. It is not improbable that he also judged that Nelson was not likely to heed it if he felt himself in a condition to disregard it. If this was his idea, it was fully verified. The *Elephant* was opposite to the *Dannebrog*, the flagship of the Danish Commander-in-chief, and Nelson was walking up and down the quarterdeck, full of animation and in the highest spirits, as he always was when in action, commenting, as the splinters flew around him, on the gallantry of the Danes, and on his own good fortune in being their antagonist, when the signal-lieutenant reported to him that No. 39, the signal for discontinuing action, was flying on board the *London*. Nelson made no

reply ; he seemed not to have noticed the report. " Was he to repeat it ?" the lieutenant presently asked. " No ; acknowledge it." After another turn, " Is No. 16" (the signal for close action) " still hoisted ?" " Yes, my Lord." " Mind you keep it so." Presently he turned to his Captain : " You know, Foley, I have only one eye. I have a right to be blind sometimes ;" and, putting his glass to his blind eye, he added, " I really don't see the signal." Admiral Graves, as the *Defiance* was of the whole squadron the line-of-battle ship nearest to the Commander-in-chief, did not venture to neglect repeating it ; but, as he still kept No. 16 flying also in its old place, it is probable that the ships of his division did not notice it. At all events, none of them slackened their fire. Riou with his frigates, alone obeyed the Commander-in-chief's signal, with great reluctance ; but feeling that no other course was open to him if he would save his squadron from absolute destruction ; for the heavy *Trekroner* Battery had overpowered the weak fire of his frigates, and they had been terribly shattered without having it in their power to retaliate in any adequate manner. Yet it was not without a bitter feeling of shame that the gallant Riou gave the order to haul off. " What," said he, " will Nelson think of us ?" He could not, in reality have doubted that his great Chief would do him justice, as in fact he did ; but he was not spared to know the warmth of the eulogy\* with which Nelson acknowledged his services. He had already been wounded in the head, and, as his ship in retreating exposed her quarterdeck even more than before to the batteries, a shot struck him in the loins, and cut him actually in two.

The rest of our fleet continued the action with unabated and resistless vigour ; and another hour showed the fruits of Nelson's superior resolution and judgment, in the

\* Nelson in his official despatch calls him " the gallant and good Captain Riou,"—' Despatches,' iv. 314.

weakening of the enemy's fire, which by two o'clock had ceased altogether in the rearmost part of their line, and more than half their ships and batteries had hauled down their colours. The victory was won. And now a new difficulty arose, which was, how to get possession of the prizes; for, in defiance of all the usual rules of war, our boats which were sent for that purpose were fired on by the batteries on shore, and even by the ships themselves that had struck, though the island batteries could only reach our boats by firing across those ships, and adding of course to the loss which they had already sustained. Nelson was angry at the breach of the usual laws of battle, and shocked at the needless havoc which was being thus caused by it. In his view, the moment that the Danes on board the captured ships had become his prisoners, he had become their protector; and acting on this idea, and feeling that he had now attained so decisive a superiority in the battle that he could afford to be the first to propose its suspension, he retired to the stern-gallery, and, while the enemy's bullets were still dealing death around him, wrote a letter to the Crown Prince: "He was authorised," he said, "to spare Denmark when she ceased to resist; but, if the firing on his boats was continued, he must burn his prizes without having the power of saving the brave men who defended them. The brave Danes," he added, "were the brothers, and should never be the enemies of the English." When the letter was finished he sent to his cabin for wax with which to seal it. He was offered a wafer. "No," said he; "this is not a time to appear hurried or informal." The man who had been sent for the wax was killed on his way to the cabin. He ordered another messenger to be sent on the same errand; and, having carefully sealed the letter, he sent Captain Sir Frederick Thesiger, a young officer who was serving with him on this occasion as a volunteer, to convey it, under a flag of truce, to the Crown Prince.

Meantime the ships ahead of the Elephant were completing the victory; and Sir Frederick had scarcely departed on his errand of peace when an incident took place somewhat resembling on a smaller scale the most striking event of the battle of the Nile; the Dannebrog, the flagship, was seen to be in flames, and her cables having parted, or having been shot away, she began to drift among her consorts, and to threaten them with even a worse destruction than our fire could have dealt; again, as in the case of L'Orient, the crew of the burning ship were seen plunging in mad terror into the waves, and our boats exerting themselves to save the lives of their enemies. At the end of an hour she blew up; but before that catastrophe took place the Danish Adjutant-General, M. Lindholm, also bearing a flag of truce, had accompanied Sir Frederic Thesiger on his return to the Elephant, to inquire the object of Nelson's note. Nelson at once wrote a second letter to the Crown Prince, explaining that his object was humanity, and that, acting in this spirit, he consented that hostilities should cease; and while Thesiger returned to the shore with this note, Lindholm, at Nelson's suggestion, proceeded to the London, to confer with the Commander-in-chief on the entire termination of hostilities. And, as the best proof of the sincerity with which he desired the re-establishment of peace, Nelson began at once to withdraw his ships from their menacing position.\* Though

\* In the 'History of My Life and Times,' lately published by Orsted, the idea which other Danish writers have advanced, that Nelson's letter to the Crown Prince was but a stratagem to conceal his inability to carry on the action, is expressly controverted. Orsted says:—"That a blow like that falling as it did upon a high-spirited and susceptible nation should rarely be alluded to without some attendant remark, either on the injustice with which it was struck or the courage by which it was resisted is what we expect. And such is the case. The submission of the Danes has been explained or excused: though the best excuse lies in the history and the unimpeached bravery of the Danes, nowhere more readily admitted than in England, where a fourth, perhaps, of the population is of Danish blood. It is remarkable, however, that the further we become removed from the time of the action the more such explanations abound. One of the first



the wind was still fair for such a movement, it was not easy to make it: for the Danish fire had been steadily and truly aimed at the hulls of our ships, so that there was hardly one that was not severely crippled; while the shoals at the northern end of the King's Channel were as numerous and as intricate as those in any other quarter. The very first ship, the *Monarch*, touched the ground, but was pushed over the shoal by the *Ganges*, which came next; and both the flagships, the *Defiance* and the *Elephant*, became firmly fixed on another shoal about a mile from the *Trekroner*. Nelson quitted the *Elephant*, and proceeded in his gig to the *London*, to take part in the conference between Sir Hyde and Lindholm. When the battle began, and all around him were anxious and oppressed, he had been full of animation and high spirits; now that all his followers were exulting in the splendour of their triumph, he was melancholy and dispirited. His tender heart was shocked at the horror and suffering which he saw around him, and at the miserable fate of those who had perished in the *Dannebrog*. He recovered his energy, however, the moment that he reached the *London* and found something to do. It was agreed that there should be a suspension of hostilities, and that all the prizes should be surrendered without further resistance. And

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"archæologists in Europe, Mr. Worsaae, and who, from the fact of his work being well-known in England, has the greatest authority, has committed himself to the doctrine that Nelson's success was diplomatic rather than naval: that he concealed his own weakness; and that, had the Danes but known it, the resistance might have been successful. The best evidence to set against this is that of Orsted, at that time a young man: he was afterwards prime minister; so that he had opportunities of forming a judgment, both from what he remembered as a cotemporary witness, and from what he might learn as an official to whom all documents were accessible. Brother to the great physical philosopher, he shared with him his philosophic caution. He expressly controverts the doctrine of the present generation, and states that the Danes gave in because their resources were exhausted. And, doubtless, his view is both the more patriotic and the more noble. The resistance of brave men is regulated only by what they know of their own resources."

I am indebted for this note to the kindness of my friend Mr. Watts, of the British Museum.

though, in one or two instances, some attempt was made to elude this last condition, it was at last fully performed. It was necessary, however, that some more definite arrangements for the renewal of peace should be agreed on than M. Lindholm had authority to conclude; and, as we had no authorised diplomatic agent on board the fleet, it was felt that Nelson, who had won the victory, was the fittest person to put the finishing stroke to it by concluding the negotiation. Accordingly, on the second day after the battle, he landed to confer with the Crown Prince. His only attendants were his two Captains, Hardy and Fremantle; and, in the opinion of some of his friends, the trusting himself among the population of the city before the excitement of their recent struggle could have had time to cool down, was an audacious if not a rash measure. The Prince sent down a strong guard to the shore to escort him in safety to the palace; but, except to do him honour, it was hardly needed. The citizens showed as much admiration at his courage and confidence in thus trusting himself among them, as resentment at the evil he had done them; and not even a murmur was raised as he passed through the crowded streets. The Prince himself received him with cordiality, and opened the conversation by thanking him for his humanity to his wounded subjects; and after this amicable prelude they at once proceeded to business. According to Nelson, seamen are bad negociators, for they settle in five minutes what would occupy diplomatists for five months: and in this view he himself was the worst negociator possible, for he now declared the object of his different proposals as frankly as if he had been discussing them with our own Ministers. He said plainly that his object was to separate Denmark from the Russian alliance. And when a difficulty was raised about the length of the armistice to be agreed upon, and for which he proposed a duration of sixteen weeks, he avowed that his object was to have time to go up the

Baltic and act against the Russians, and then to return to Copenhagen before it had expired. After one or two more conferences, and a grand state dinner, the whole was adjusted to his satisfaction. The armistice was fixed at fourteen weeks, with a further period of fourteen days to give notice of the renewal of hostilities; and during this period our fleet was to be treated in every respect as that of a friendly nation, being allowed to provide itself in the Danish markets with everything which it required; while our ships on the other hand, were bound to abstain from causing the least molestation or hindrance to the trading vessels of Denmark.

The treaty was signed on the 9th. When Nelson insisted on the extended duration of the armistice, and avowed his reasons, he would seem to have calculated on his Commander-in-Chief being as prompt as himself; but Sir Hyde had not yet learnt the value of time. Even before the treaty was concluded, Nelson strongly recommended that he himself should be sent to cruize off Carlscrona, where a Swedish fleet lay ready for sea, in order to prevent its junction with the Russians. But this proposal was rejected, and Sir Hyde decided on proceeding thither himself with the greater part of the fleet, leaving Nelson, in the *St. George*, to follow with the rest, as soon as they were sufficiently repaired. As little time as possible was consumed in repairs; but when those ships which it was possible to render fit for active service, had been refitted, the wind had become foul. And Nelson was still unable to advance, when, on the evening of the 19th, he received a letter from Sir Hyde, informing him that a Swedish squadron was at sea. Sir Hyde was off Bornholm, about twenty-four miles from Copenhagen. The wind was still foul; but the moment Nelson received the letter he ordered a boat to be manned, and though it was nearly dark, set out to row to his Commander-in-chief, to be in time for the battle which the news seemed to announce.

He was suffering from severe indisposition, the night was bitterly cold, yet so eager was his hurry that he would not even stop to get a greatcoat ; when in the boat, they offered him a cloak, he refused it, saying, " his anxiety for his country kept him warm ;" and presently declared that if the fleet had proceeded to Carlsrona he would follow it thither. At midnight he reached the Elephant, in which he again hoisted his flag, and the next morning the Swedish squadron was in sight. It was too weak, however, to cope with ours, and returned into the harbour of Carlsrona, whither Sir Hyde followed it, and opened a negotiation with its Admiral, which, though no definite treaty was concluded, relieved us from all apprehensions of any hostile movement on the part of Sweden.

Sir Hyde now began to think of advancing up the Gulf of Finland, but, before he could decide on his course of action, a despatch reached him from Count Pahlen, the Governor of St. Petersburg, announcing the death of the Emperor Paul, and intimating the existence of a more friendly disposition towards Britain on the part of his successor. In fact, some of Paul's chief Ministers and officers, with the concurrence of at least a part of the Royal family, had murdered Paul, as the most effectual mode of changing his policy ; and its entire reversal was almost a necessary consequence of the accession of the new Sovereign under such circumstances. These particulars, however, were as yet unknown ; and Nelson at once urged upon Sir Hyde that, if the Russians were willing to treat, the best way to strengthen them in that inclination was to move the whole fleet up to Revel. Sir Hyde preferred returning to Copenhagen, and on the 27th the fleet again anchored in Kiøge Bay, to wait apparently for what might turn up. But before this time the Government at home had learnt how utterly unfit Sir Hyde was to be entrusted with the interests of the country in such critical circumstances ; and on the 9th of May despatches arrived recalling him, and appointing Nelson Commander-

in-chief. Nelson, whose health was very bad at this time, and whose indisposition had been increased by his anxiety and disapproval of Sir Hyde's indecision, had previously solicited his own recall; but the very instant that he received his appointment, the responsibility that it imposed on him drove away his bodily infirmities. He instantly made the signal to prepare to weigh; and the moment that Sir Hyde quitted the fleet, he sailed for Bornholm. There he left a squadron, under Captain Murray, to watch the Swedes, on whose recent friendship he was unwilling to place too implicit a reliance; and with ten sail of the line and two frigates he himself proceeded to Revel. He reached it on the 12th, but the Russian fleet was no longer there. During the interval which had been wasted by our return to Kioge, the ice, which had kept it locked up during the winter, had broken up; and the fleet, consisting of twelve sail of the line, had retired to Cronstadt. Nelson did not attempt to follow it thither, especially as he was no longer at liberty to attack it; but contented himself with sending a message to General Sacken, the Governor of the port, to inquire whether he was instructed to salute the fleet. After a little evasion the salute was given and returned, and the next day Nelson landed to confer with the Governor: while letters which he had written to the Emperor and to Count Pahlen were forwarded to St. Petersburg. The next day the Governor returned his visit. Count Pahlen's reply was couched in a friendly tone; but remonstrated against the presence of our fleet off a Russian port, which he described as scarcely compatible with Nelson's amicable language. Nelson, though he was far from being pleased with the whole tone of the Count's reply, resolved to give him no ground for complaint, and at once withdrew the fleet, but in the course of the next two days he received a visit from the Russian Admiral, Tchitchagoff, whom the new Emperor had sent to treat with him; and his mingled

frankness and firmness soon carried every point which he thought necessary. The British ships which Paul had seized were given up, and peace was fully restored between the two empires. Nelson returned down the Baltic, anchoring for a day or two off Rostock, and receiving everywhere marks of the extraordinary respect in which he was held by people of all nations and of all classes. From thence he returned to Copenhagen; and there, having, for the sake of his health, earnestly requested his recall, he was relieved by Sir Charles Pole, and in the middle of June he returned to England.

The Northern Confederacy, which Buonaparte had tried to arm against us, had thus melted like its own snow. And in the waters of Southern Europe it cannot be said that France and her ally, Spain, gained any advantage of great value, though they obtained a trophy, in the capture of two British ships of the line, such as had not before fallen to their lot in the whole course of the war. The army which Buonaparte had left in Egypt was still in that country, struggling with admirable courage against the entire population; and being also in great and notorious want of supplies of every kind. The relief of this army was one of the dearest objects of the First Consul; and before the close of the preceding year he had equipped a fleet of seven sail of the line and some frigates at Brest, the command of which he had entrusted to Admiral Ganteaume. Besides stores of all kinds, the ships had on board five thousand men to reinforce the army. And in the first week of the year it weighed anchor, and started for the Mediterranean. It had, however, hardly got to sea when it was driven back by a division of our Channel fleet, under Sir H. Harvey; and it was not till the 23rd that a gale from the north, which blew the British squadron off the coast, enabled Ganteaume to pursue his voyage. His beginnings were not prosperous: the very gale which enabled him to leave his port dispersed his fleet, and crippled

some of those ships which kept together ; and a day or two afterwards one of his frigates, the *Bravoure*, 36, fell in with the British frigate *Concorde*, of the same force, and, after a smart action, was only saved from capture by one or two of her consorts of the line, who, coming in sight, compelled the English captain, R. Barton, to consult his own safety by flight. The second week in February, Ganteaume passed the Straits ; he captured the *Success* frigate, which, however, was soon afterwards retaken ; but hearing that Sir J. B. Warren was in the neighbourhood, instead of pursuing his course to the east, he retired to Toulon. Warren steered towards Sicily, partly to get between the French fleet and Egypt, and partly to protect our interests in the South of Italy ; and towards the latter end of March, having been joined by the *Alexander* and *Athenien*, which raised his squadron to seven sail of the line, a number equal to that of the French, he too bore up from Palermo towards Toulon. On his way he heard that the enemy were again at sea, and, coming in sight of them on the 25th, he a second time compelled M. Ganteaume to seek shelter in Toulon.

Buonaparte, however, felt the object of relieving his Egyptian army one of too great importance to be lightly abandoned. He did not know that at the time that Ganteaume was last driven back into Toulon its fate had been already decided by the battle of Alexandria. And he now sent his Admiral peremptory orders to make one more attempt to reach it. On the 27th of April the fleet again quitted Toulon, and arrived off the western end of the Egyptian territories on the 9th of June ; but just as the troops were preparing to disembark, Lord Keith, who had heard of Ganteaume's approach from a frigate which he had chased, came in sight with his fleet, and once more the French Admiral fled back to Toulon. On his way he met with an unexpected piece of good fortune. Captain Hallowell, in the *Swiftsure*, was moving along the Barbary

coast towards Malta, when, on the 24th of June, he saw the French squadron, and almost at the same moment they perceived him. He made all sail to escape, but, as was almost always the case, the French ships proved by far the better sailers, and in a few hours two of their line-of-battle, one of which, the *Indivisible*, was an 80-gun ship, and, as such, by far more powerful than any seventy-four in our service, had almost overtaken him when, as his only hope of escape, he ventured on a bold manœuvre, somewhat resembling that by which, if the Roman historians have truly described the achievement, the last of the *Horatii* delivered his countrymen from slavery. His more immediate pursuers were some way ahead of the rest of the fleet; and, seeing this, instead of continuing his direct flight, he altered his course and bore down upon them, hoping, perhaps, to disable one of them before her comrades could arrive to support her, that then he might resume his flight with a better prospect of success. The plan was boldly conceived, but the French ships were too powerful to allow it to succeed. The *Swiftsure* was unusually short-handed, for Lord Keith, when she quitted his fleet, had taken a hundred of her best men to complete the crews of one or two other ships, and she had nearly sixty sick. Nevertheless for above an hour and a half she kept up a gallant contest with her two powerful antagonists, inflicting on them a loss in killed and wounded far greater than she sustained herself. She was, however, sadly crippled in her masts and rigging; and at last the length of the combat enabled two more of Ganteaume's squadron to come up. Then, and not till then, Hallowell struck his colours, and M. Ganteaume returned to Toulon with a trophy, which, from the rarity of its kind, was some compensation for the failure of his repeated attempts to fulfil the commission on which he was originally despatched.

Our expedition to Egypt had been more successful.



After Lord Keith and Sir R. Abercromby had retired from Cadiz, in the autumn of 1800, they proceeded to Minorca, and from that island they set sail about a month afterwards. They halted a short time at Malta, and going up the northern side of the Levant, in order to communicate more easily with the Turkish authorities, they stayed a few days in the harbour of Marmorice; then crossed to Egypt: and on the 2nd of March cast anchor in Aboukir Bay. The army was at once disembarked. It belongs not to naval history to tell of its triumphs, or of the death of its brave General; but some portion of the glory won in the battle of Alexandria it must share with the navy. Not the least effective of its bands was a naval brigade of a thousand seamen, whom Lord Keith landed from the ships and placed under the command of Sir Sidney Smith; while, after the battle, when General Hutchinson, who had succeeded Abercromby in the command began to march up the banks of the Nile to attack the positions held by the French in the interior of the country, he was aided in no slight degree by a powerful division of gunboats under the command of Captain Stevenson, which, though at that period of the year the river is extremely low, made its way up it for a hundred and seventy miles, and, in co-operation with some Spanish vessels of the same class, successfully attacked the French forts at Rahmanieh. As Rahmanieh is the starting-point of the canal which leads from the Nile to Alexandria, the occupation of it by our troops cut off all communication between that city and the interior of the country, and therefore contributed immediately to the reduction of Cairo, where Belliard and his army capitulated at the end of May. The operations of the same flotilla three months afterwards, combined with those of another squadron of small vessels under the command of Sir Sidney Smith, were of equal service in the attack upon Alexandria. The gunboats entered the lake Mareotis, escorting a body of troops

under the command of Major-General Coote. The French endeavoured to burn them, but only destroyed their own boats in the attempt. And then our combined force proceeded against the small but strongly-fortified island of Marabout, which commanded the entrance to the western harbour. After two days of vigorous resistance, the French commander surrendered; and a flotilla of British sloops and Turkish corvettes entered the harbour. A French 64-gun ship, the *Causse*, with three French and two Venetian frigates, finding themselves unable to force their way out, retreated to the head of the harbour, and tried to arrest our progress by sinking some merchant-vessels in their front. But all hope of escape was gone from them as from their army. Hutchinson opened a heavy fire on the French camp, while Sir Sidney prepared to bombard the city from the sea. On the second of September, Menou, the French General, capitulated. His army was allowed to return to France, but the ships were surrendered and divided between us and our Turkish allies. Among them was *La Justice*, which had escaped from the battle of the Nile, and subsequently from the ships which captured the *Guillaume Tell*. She, however was, allotted to the Turks; while those which fell to our share were the *Régénérée*, which in preceding years had fought more than one gallant action with our cruisers; and the *Egyptienne*, of forty-eight guns, more than half of which were long 24-pounders, constituting her, when she had been refitted in our dockyards, the most powerful frigate in our navy. General Hutchinson, who, on the death of Sir R. Abercromby, had succeeded to the command, did ample justice to the services of the sailors in contributing to the success thus obtained. In his official despatches he more than once speaks of their unremitting exertions as exceeding all description and praise of his. Their labours, he truly said, "had not been for one day, or for one week, but for months together;" and

without their assistance he proclaimed that it would have been absolutely "impossible for him to have succeeded."

It is curious, considering the manner in which his fate at a later period was connected with it, that one of the objects on which Buonaparte's heart was most firmly set at this moment, was the acquisition of the little island of Elba. It belonged partly to Naples and partly to Tuscany. The Neapolitan Government had been compelled to cede its portion to him; but a small British and Tuscan garrison occupied the town and citadel of Porto Ferraja. In the course of the summer he despatched an army of upwards of six thousand men to the eastern coast of the island, to besiege the fortress on its landward side; with three frigates, among which was the *Success*, whose capture from us at the beginning of the year we have already mentioned, to blockade it by sea. The naval part of the expedition was wholly unfortunate; for three British frigates, the *Minerve*, Captain Cockburn, the *Phoenix*, Captain Halsted, and the *Pomone*, Captain Leveson Gower, attacked the blockading squadron, retook the *Success*, and of her consorts captured one, and destroyed the other; and the army was not much more successful. Sir John Warren, who, in September arrived off the island with a powerful squadron, lent Colonel Airey, who was in command of the mixed garrison of the fortress, a body of seamen and marines to co-operate in an attack upon the French batteries, which met with but a partial success: most, indeed, of the French batteries were destroyed and nearly sixty prisoners were carried off; but the loss of the assailants was heavy, and they were finally driven back, leaving about a hundred of their party in the hands of the enemy. M. Watrin, the French general, magnified their repulse into a splendid triumph; but it did not enable him to reduce Porto Ferrajo, and that fortress continued unsub-

duced till the end of the year, when the treaty of Amiens brought about, what it was hoped was a termination, but what proved only an interruption of the war.

M. Ganteaume's fleet was not the only one which Buonaparte put in motion for the relief of his Egyptian army. In the middle of June, Admiral Linois received the command of a small squadron which had originally formed a part of the Toulon fleet, and sailed towards Cadiz to unite his force to a squadron of Spanish ships lying in that harbour, which its Government had recently lent to the French, and which were now manned with French crews under the command of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. On his way, as he approached the Straits, he was lucky enough to capture the *Speedy*, and one or two small trading-vessels, from which he learnt that a British force superior to his own was blockading Cadiz. He did not judge it safe, nor perhaps possible, to force his way through such an obstacle ; but he was unwilling wholly to abandon the object of his instructions while there was a chance of being able to execute them ; and, after passing Gibraltar, he, on the 4th of July, took his squadron into the Bay of Algesiras, which was fortified with some heavy forts and batteries, and also contained at this moment a formidable flotilla of fourteen gunboats. His ships were *Le Formidable*, 80, *L'Indomptable*, 80, *Le Dessaix*, 74, and a 38-gun frigate, *Meuron* ; and, as he moored them close in shore, he entertained no doubt that his position, supported as it was by the batteries and gunboats, was strong enough to defy any attack which was likely to be made on it. For the squadron now blockading Cadiz, which had been sent thither under Sir James Saumarez for the express purpose of preventing the Spanish ships from putting to sea, and the French squadron from forcing its way in to join them, consisted

of no more than seven sail of the line,\* only one of them carrying as many as eighty guns ; with one frigate ; and one of them, the *Superb*, 74, Captain Keats, had been absent for three or four days on a detached service. The Governor of Gibraltar was of a different opinion, and, as soon as *Linois* had anchored, despatched a small vessel to Saumarez with intelligence of the French squadron. Sir James instantly raised the blockade, hastened to attack the enemy, and at daybreak on the morning of the 6th the British topmasts were seen by the French ships rising over Cabrita Point. As, on the 1st of June eight years before, a British captain was a prisoner on board one of the French ships, so it happened now. Lord Cochrane, whose capture in the *Speedy* a few days before has already been alluded to, was on board his captor, *Le Dessaix* ; and, as had also happened in the former instance, her captain inquired of him what he expected his countrymen would do. Lord Cochrane's answer was nearly the same that Troubridge had given : he prophesied that before night his querist and all his comrades would be carried into Gibraltar. Unfortunately his prediction was not equally verified. *Linois* had not expected to be attacked, and, being a man of but moderate capacity, and of no very enterprising courage, he thought of nothing but how to escape capture ; and in order to make it more difficult for his assailants to reach him with effect, he hoisted out his boats to warp the

\* The entire squadron was composed of the following ships :—

80	<i>Cæsar</i>	..	..	..	..	{ Sir J. Saumarez. Captain J. Brenton.
	<i>Pompée</i>	..	..	..	..	Captain C. Sterling.
	<i>Spencer</i>	..	..	..	..	Captain H. Darby.
74	<i>Venerable</i>	..	..	..	..	Captain S. Hood.
	<i>Superb</i>	..	..	..	..	Captain R. Keats.
	<i>Hannibal</i>	..	..	..	..	Captain Ferris.
	<i>Audacious</i>	..	..	..	..	Captain S. Peard.
82	<i>Thames</i>	..	..	..	..	Captain P. Holles.

ships closer in to the shore. The manifest consternation of their commander produced its natural effect upon his followers. His orders were executed in such haste and confusion, that his ships were all run aground, so as to present their sterns to their assailants ; and had not the wind, which had hitherto been fair for the British squadron, on a sudden almost died away, it can hardly be doubted that this manœuvre would have only increased the certainty of his destruction. As matters turned out, it tended to his success, though not in the way in which he had expected. As his broadside guns were no longer available, he sent a large portion of the crew of each ship on shore, to reinforce the garrisons of the batteries, which eventually bore the brunt of the day. A little before nine o'clock Captain Hood led the way in, closely followed by Captain Sterling, and, having anchored, opened a vigorous fire on the French ships ; but they found themselves exposed to such a heavy cannonade from the batteries on shore, which the reinforcement from the ships enabled the garrison to work with unusual effect, that they slipped their cables, and were in consequence borne by the strong current that set in from the ocean into positions less favourable for crippling the enemy. As the other British ships came in, the gunboats also opened a well-directed fire upon them ; but this annoyance did not last long, as the superior fire from our squadron soon sunk five, disabled two more, and compelled the rest to retreat. The French ships, being unable to use any guns but their stern-chasers, could make but a feeble reply to our cannonade, and, though the fire from the batteries, and especially from one on a small island known as Isla Verde, at the southern end of the Bay, still galled our ships severely, all was going well, when Captain Ferris of the Hannibal, ignorant that the French ships were aground, unhappily conceived the idea that, by passing inside them, he might bring

the action to an immediate termination. He, of course, ran aground too, close under the guns of a heavy battery known by the name of St. Jago; where his bows were exposed to be raked by the broadsides of the French ships. They, with the battery, at once opened on him; some of the gunboats too swarmed around him, and the loss of the *Hannibal* was soon seen to be inevitable. But few of her guns could be brought to bear on any of her assailants; and those few were soon dismounted by the concentrated fire directed upon her: still she made a gallant defence; nor was it till his rigging was almost destroyed, and nearly a hundred and forty of his crew were killed or wounded, that Captain Ferris desisted from a hopeless resistance, and struck his colours. Saumarez had made all possible efforts to rescue his brave follower: not relinquishing them till the *Cæsar* was greatly crippled by the heavy guns of the batteries; and till the strong current which prevented him from approaching the French ships from the outside, threatened at the same time to drive him on shoals which were ascertained to be close to the batteries; at last he reluctantly hauled off, and retired to Gibraltar. Accident increased the advantage which the enemy had obtained. The prize crew which was sent on board to take possession of the *Hannibal* had omitted to take a French ensign with them; and, in token that the ship was theirs, were content to rehoist the English flag upside down. Such a position of the flag was commonly understood as a signal of distress, and the authorities at Gibraltar looking upon it as such, in this instance, manned a number of boats with men from the dockyard, and sent them, as they conceived, to the assistance of the endangered ship. They were of course all seized on reaching her, and the want of them was severely felt during the next week.

For Saumarez was not a man to sit down tamely under his defeat without striving to retrieve it; and for the next

few days he and his followers laboured incessantly to refit the ships for another battle. Some of them, especially the *Cæsar* and the *Pompée*, had received such damages that, crippled as the dockyard was by the capture of so many of the workmen in the boats, it seemed almost impossible that they could be repaired in any reasonable time: and Sir James would have hoisted his flag in the *Audacious*, and have drafted the *Cæsar*'s men to supply the losses sustained by the rest of the squadron, had it not been for the earnest entreaties, preferred on their behalf by Captain Brenton, that he would give them a chance of avenging themselves in their own ship. Doubtfully, but not unwillingly, he consented. The whole crew worked all day, and watch and watch during the night, as only Englishmen can work, and by the night of the 11th the good ship was again ready. It was not too soon. The ships at Cadiz were no longer blockaded; and *Linois* had sent a pressing message to the Spanish Admiral Massaredo and his own countryman Dumanoir, begging them to come to his aid, as the English were preparing to burn his squadron at its anchorage. Dumanoir was too zealous for the honour of his country to neglect such an appeal; but seconded the application addressed to the Spanish Admiral with such energy that Massaredo yielded, and despatched a squadron of six sail of the line and two frigates, under Vice-Admiral Moreno, to join *Linois* at Algeiras. Three of the vessels were first-rates, two of them, the *Real Carlos* and the *Hermenegildo*, mounting not fewer than a hundred and twelve guns each; Dumanoir's own flag was hoisted in the *San Antonio*: and in the course of the 9th and 10th they joined *Linois*, who was labouring zealously to get both his own ships and the *Hannibal* afloat, in order to return to Cadiz with their united force.

Our men were resolved to prevent their doing so: and the work of repair proceeded in all our ships almost as vigorously as in the *Cæsar*. The *Pompée* was so much



shattered that it was found impossible to refit her in time; but her place was supplied by the junction of the *Superb*, with which Captain Keats arrived on the 10th. Still, even after his arrival, Saumarez had but five sail of the line now fit for service : apparently an inadequate force with which to cope with an enemy of almost double his numbers, two-thirds of whose ships were fresh, to say nothing of the vast superiority in size of the three three-deckers. By the night of the 11th the whole of Linois's squadron, and his prize the *Hannibal*, were again afloat, their damages repaired, and ready for sea ; and soon after midday on the 12th the united squadrons were seen getting under way. The *Cæsar* had hardly replenished her stores of ammunition when the enemy's movements were reported to the Admiral: with as brief delay as possible he warped out of the mole, signalling to his followers to prepare for battle. Eye-witnesses have left us accounts of the scene that ensued, and few more stirring spectacles have ever been beheld. The action of the 6th had been within sight of the fortress, and there was not a soldier, nor even a peaceful citizen, who had not felt personal humiliation at its unexpected and unwonted termination. The knowledge that the British squadron was now setting out to retrieve and avenge that disaster, again brought every one to the walls, and, though the disparity of the two armaments was visible to every eye, no heart in the whole garrison or town quailed, or doubted for a moment that the British sailor would reassert his supremacy. As the *Cæsar* weighed anchor the Admiral's band cheered the crew with "Hearts of Oak," the military band from the shore replied with "Britons strike home," and, under the influence of these popular and inspiring airs, the little squadron pressed forward as to an assured triumph, with a confidence that was in itself no untrustworthy omen of victory. The enemy had the start by an hour or two, and it was dark when we came up with them ; but Sir James was too

fearful of their escaping him to wait till morning, and, as the *Superb* was pressing onward, he ordered Captain Keats to attack as soon as ever he could close with them. The *Superb* was a remarkably fast sailer, and, in execution of her welcome orders, soon outstripped her comrades ; but it was nearly midnight when she got within gunshot of the rearmost of the enemy's ships, the huge three-decker the *Real Carlos*. With her were two other ships, so nearly in a line with her that many of the shots of the *Superb* which missed the *Real Carlos* struck them ; greater confusion has seldom been seen : the darkness hindered Keats from ascertaining the names of the ships with which he was engaged, and at the same time it prevented them from seeing from whence came the shots that they received. They all began firing at random ; but far oftener at one another than at the *Superb* : and in a very short time the *Real Carlos* was seen to be on fire. Keats passed on in search of another antagonist, and soon came up with the *Antonio*, 74, which, though bearing a Spanish name, was manned by a French crew : she surrendered after a very brief resistance ; but, while he was engaged with her, one of the most singular events occurred that is recorded in the annals of war. The fire on board the *Real Carlos* had been almost extinguished, when the other great three-decker, the *Hermenegildo*, fell aboard her, and, taking her in the dark for one of our ships, opened a furious cannonade upon her : it rekindled the fire, which was nearly subdued, and which presently communicated itself to the *San Hermenegildo* ; the two enormous first-rates lay for some time cannonading one another and burning, till at last they both blew up, and nearly the whole of their crews perished. The destruction of these two ships and the capture of the *San Antonio*, brought the two squadrons almost to an equality, and Saumarez eagerly continued the chase with his whole squadron. He was greatly baffled in his exertions by the wind, which soon after midnight rose to a stiff

breeze, and again, before daylight, almost died away ; while the enemy's squadron, being a little ahead of him, continued to feel its effects somewhat later. All night the enemy continued their flight, and at daybreak the only one of them within shot of any of our ships was the Formidable. The Venerable, which was closer in-shore than any of her consorts, soon began to overhaul her, and, aided by the Thames, attacked her vigorously. The Formidable, still pressing on her way towards Cadiz, replied with great gallantry, and, as a French 80-gun ship was infinitely more powerful than a British seventy-four, with very great effect. Soon the Venerable lost her mizen topmast, presently her mainmast too was shot away ; she became almost unmanageable. The Formidable continued both her flight and her fire ; in another hour the Venerable lost her foremast also, and almost at the same moment she struck heavily on a shoal. Instantly the Formidable halted and redoubled her attack upon her, while Saumarez, fearing above all things to let another ship fall into the hands of the enemy, sent a boat on board the Venerable to authorise Hood to set fire to her rather than surrender her. Hood, however, would not abandon his ship ; and, as the approach of the Superb and Audacious compelled the Formidable to leave off attacking her, and to provide for her own safety, after a few hours, by the aid of the boats of the other ships, he got her off the shoal, and, rigging a jury-mast, brought her safe into Gibraltar.

There the squadron, on its return, was received with an exultation proportioned to the disappointment which had been felt at the previous defeat. And, though the destruction of the two first-rates was chiefly owing to accident, there was yet enough in the pursuit of, and encounter with, so superior a force, and in the capture of the San Antonio, to warrant the feeling that the British fleet had fully re-established its superiority.

Buonaparte's policy had sustained a severe check in the

expulsion of his army from Egypt ; but an object of far greater importance in his eyes than any Eastern conquest was the successful invasion of England ; and throughout the whole year he had been collecting, in the ports most immediately opposite to our shores, a vast flotilla of gun-boats, and every other kind of small vessel, to transport an army across the Channel ; while a camp was formed at Boulogne, in which, about the middle of July, he began to assemble a large body of picked troops, which the peace that he had concluded with Austria in the spring had left disposable. The fortification of our own coasts had never been greatly attended to ; and the alarm which was spread throughout the nation by these preparations of the French ruler was so general, that, though Nelson had returned, at the end of June, from the Baltic, on account of manifest and severe indisposition, before the middle of July he was solicited to take the command of a squadron to watch the movements of the threatening enemy. He was far from being recovered, and the service now required of him afforded no scope for his genius : but his countrymen could not be brought to believe that they were safe under any other care but his ; and, thinking himself bound to give his services in any kind of employment for which they might be required, he shook off his ill-health, and began to apply himself to carrying out the objects of his new appointment with his usual energetic zeal, which, as he said himself, was the only qualification which he had for it. That zeal and energy were, however, so great, that within a few days after the command was first offered to him, he was able to draw up, and lay before the Admiralty, a memorandum of suggestions for the defence of the whole line of our coast, and more especially of the Thames, which, greatly as the introduction of steam-vessels has altered the whole character of naval warfare, is still deserving of the careful study of all those who

may at any time have the defence of the country entrusted to the sagacity of their precautions against danger at a distance, or to the valour of their arms when it is near. He anticipated (and it is a singular proof of the soundness of his ideas that, in the debates upon our fortifications that have recently taken place in Parliament, this idea has been reproduced by men who were apparently ignorant of his memorandum) that, whenever a descent on our coasts should be attempted, it would be made in at least two separate divisions; and, while he looked on Sussex or Kent as likely to be the scene of the main invasion, he thought that a second branch of the expedition would cross over from Dunkirk and the Flemish ports to the coast of Essex, or even of Suffolk, so as to menace London on both sides at once. Of the result of such an enterprise he had no fear whatever: he described the arrangements which he proposed for our own flotillas of gunboats, flat-boats, and other small vessels; for the frigates and larger vessels, which should support them; and for a series of floating-batteries, on which, in the event of the enemy really approaching our shores, he placed especial reliance. He had but little doubt that, if ever they put to sea, our ships would find it easy to destroy them before they reached the middle of the Channel; but, leaving no contingency out of his calculation in a matter of such importance, he included in his observations the possibility of their eluding our boats, and actually reaching our shores; and pointed out that, in such a case, they would be more easily destroyed than ever, since our boats, which must at least overtake them while disembarking their men, would be able to attack their unarmed sterns; and he expressed a firm belief that "the courage of Britons would never allow one Frenchman to leave the beach." He thought it possible that other and more distant points of the coast might also be menaced, if the fleets from Brest

and Rochefort should be able to put to sea at the same time ; but, however numerous the attacks might be, the failure of all he considered equally certain.

With these comprehensive and courageous views he, on the 27th of July, hoisted his flag, at Sheerness, in the *Unité*, transferring it a few days afterwards to the *Medusa*, 32, Captain Gore, which he sent for with that object, and began without delay to carry the ideas he had thus expressed into execution. As usual he inspired all who were employed under him with a portion of his own energy ; and the alacrity which all exhibited to fulfil his orders surprised even him, and soon rendered all the projects of the enemy chimerical. On the 28th of July we were, as he said, “literally at the foundation of our fabric of defence.”\* On the 2nd of August he stood over to Boulogne, threw some shells into the town, and “ascertained that he could bombard their vessels at proper times of tide, and with the wind to the southward of the west, with the greatest facility.” On the 3rd he was able to report that between Dieppe and Dunkirk “nothing could with impunity leave the coast of France a mile.” On the 4th, the wind being fair, he sent his bombvessels in, which shelled the French flotilla, sinking five vessels, heavily armed and full of men, and greatly damaging several more ; and now he ventured to assure the Prime Minister that the French army would not embark at Boulogne. If the project was not already abandoned, he thought Flushing and the ports of Flanders more likely starting-points, because there “we could not tell by our eyes what means they had collected for carrying an army.” Still the cross-tides and other natural impediments rendered the attempt to force a passage from thence “a forlorn undertaking.” And, though “it was perfectly right to be prepared against a mad

\* Despatch to Lord St. Vincent, dated Sheerness, July 28.—‘Despatches,’ iv. 430. For subsequent Extracts, see pp. 435, 438, 445, 447. ]

Government, with the active force under his command," he pronounced it "almost impracticable."

A few days later he had reason to believe his surmises so far correct, that a force was being prepared at Ostend under Augereau, a veteran General of high reputation in the French army. He "hoped to let him feel the bottom of the Goodwin Sands." Buonaparte himself, he feared, would never give him a second chance of "catching him on the water." And he earnestly recommended to the Ministers at home an attack upon Flushing itself, which to five thousand troops and the ships under his command he thought would prove an easy enterprise; and, though he spoke of himself as still very ill, he offered to conduct the expedition himself. Meanwhile he designed a regular attack at close quarters on the French flotilla, in the hope of capturing and bringing off the vessels which composed it. He rested in apparent inactivity for two days, to throw the enemy off their guard; and on the night of the 15th he put it into execution. He planned all its details with great care; all the boats belonging to the squadron, nearly sixty in number, with fourteen gunboats and a quantity of revenue and hired cutters were employed. He arranged them in five divisions, allotting its separate work to each division and subdivision: each division was under the command of a captain; the gunboats were led by Captain Conn; the ships' boats by Captains Somerville, Cotgrave, Parker, and Jones; and, while he gave them the most minute instructions, he at the same time left them at liberty to make any additional arrangements in the mode of attack which might suggest themselves to them. A little before midnight the boats left the ships, but, in spite of the greatest valour displayed by all concerned, they failed in their object. They were baffled partly by natural circumstances, and partly by the precautions of the enemy. The darkness, the currents, and the state of the tide

separated the divisions, so that they arrived in succession instead of, as Nelson had designed, simultaneously; and one, the fourth, never reached the appointed spot at all till daybreak, when the conflict was over. The French, too, had moored their boats to the bottom and to each other with strong chains, so that to bring them off was impossible. The boats that composed the French flotilla were of a size and force out of all proportion to their assailants; some of them were brigs of upwards of two hundred tons, each armed with several guns of very heavy calibre; others, which, in his official report, Nelson calls rafts, were scarcely less formidable, being manned with from a hundred and fifty to two hundred men, and equipped with at least one heavy gun, and one large howitzer. A few such vessels might have been expected to defy all the boats of the British squadron; but in truth their number exceeded a hundred, and they were marshalled in nine divisions, with an experienced officer at the head of each; yet our men boarded, and for a moment made themselves masters of many of them; but the crews were not the only enemies whom they had to encounter. The moment that our attack began bodies of French troops were marched down to the shore, and, whenever any one of their vessels appeared to be in our power, they directed a heavy fire of musketry upon it, regardless of the fact that it was full of their own men, who must suffer from such an attack at least as much as ours. Nelson declared that more determined persevering courage than that displayed on this occasion by our men he had never witnessed; but the obstacles to their success were too great for any gallantry to overcome, and they were forced at last to return without having even been able to burn the vessels which they had for a time mastered. In killed and wounded they had lost about a hundred and seventy of their number; a loss which Nelson considered to



fall short of what might have been expected, but one which grieved him deeply, including as it did several officers of whom he had the highest opinion, and among them Captain Parker, who had received a wound in the thigh which subsequently proved to be mortal.

Nelson believed that, had all the divisions arrived together, as he had intended that they should arrive, the enterprise must have succeeded; but he was so convinced of the improbability of arrangements for a night-attack being carried out in every point, that he would not risk any more valuable lives in a second attempt; a gallant and successful dash was indeed made into the roads of St. Valery by Captain Rose of the Jamaica, a 24-gun frigate, and Captain Sarradine of the 16-gun sloop, Hound, in which their boats, with those belonging to one or two other smaller vessels, destroyed three gunboats and brought off three more, besides destroying a quantity of stores; but, with this exception, the squadron was for some weeks contented with watching the enemy, and showing them the necessity of limiting themselves to their own defence, and of abandoning all designs of attacking us. As long as he could, Nelson clung to the idea of attacking Flushing; but the pilots whom he consulted pronounced against it, and agreed in asserting that, even if he succeeded in entering and penetrating the narrow channel in his advance, his return could only be secured by a combination of both wind and tide in his favour such as could hardly be expected. Still he longed to strike one more blow at the enemy before he resigned his command; and at the beginning of October he conceived the idea of burning the whole flotilla in Boulogne harbour by means of fireships; but, while he was making his arrangements, he learnt that the preliminaries of peace were signed; and in the middle of the month he struck his flag, and went on shore to

recruit his strength, by a well earned rest, for the performance of further services to his country.

In the other quarters of the globe we had made considerable additions to our dominions during the past year, but, as our squadrons which made them met with no resistance, the acquisitions thus secured hardly deserve to be reckoned among the exploits of the navy. The short war which the Swedes and Danes provoked cost them several of their West Indian Islands ; though most of them were restored on the conclusion of peace ; and though, when Portugal was compelled by France and Spain to exclude our ships from her ports, we seized Madeira, and some of the most valuable of her settlements in the East Indies, we had no purpose of enriching ourselves at the expense of our most ancient and most faithful ally, never treated those settlements as conquered territory, and gladly gave them back again.

We have seen how the squadrons which Buonaparte sent to succour his Egyptian army failed in their object, and one or two single ships which went on the same errand met with no better success ; one was an exceedingly fine frigate, *L'Africaine*, rated at forty guns, but carrying forty-four ; she had quitted Brest, having on board four hundred troops, and a very great quantity of small arms, ammunition, and other stores ; but she had scarcely entered the Mediterranean when she fell in with the English *Phœbe*, a ship of as nearly as possible the same force as herself, commanded by Captain Robert Barlow. The *Phœbe* instantly attacked her, and there are few instances of a vessel of her size doing more deadly injury to an antagonist. In less than two hours the *Africaine* was reduced almost to a wreck ; her masts were all tottering, her sails were nearly all shot away ; she had received so many shot between wind and water, that she had four feet of water in her hold ; half her guns were dismounted, and her killed and wounded amounted

to nearly three hundred and fifty men ; it was no discredit to the survivors to surrender, but it certainly was most honorable to the British captain and crew to have reduced her to a state which left her no other alternative.

The Sibylle, too, a vessel whose exploits have been more than once mentioned, continued them under a new commander, Captain C. Adam. She was cruising off the Seychelles when she saw close in shore, a French frigate *La Chiffonne*, carrying indeed two guns fewer than her own armament, but protected also by a battery of four guns on shore : she not only took the *Chiffonne*, but she landed a lieutenant and a boat's crew which captured the battery also, and found in it, besides the guns, a regularly constructed furnace for heating shot. But the most brilliant exploit of the year, one indeed which of its kind is probably unequalled, was achieved by the *Speedy*, some of whose deeds have been recorded in the preceding chapter. Throughout the winter she had been committing such havoc among the Spanish and French coasters and privateers on the eastern coast of Spain, that more than one frigate was sent out expressly to stop her career. On the 5th of May she was cruising off Barcelona, when the movements of some gunboats, which kept advancing against her, firing and retreating, led Lord Cochrane, who was as wary as he was bold, to suspect that their intention was to decoy him within reach of some more powerful vessel. In spite of this suspicion, however, he attacked them, and endeavoured to cut some of them off ; but their fire was so well directed that they crippled his rigging, and escaped. He stood out to sea, and spent the rest of the day in repairing his damages. The next morning, on again approaching Barcelona, he discovered the object of the gunboats in seeking to tempt him to follow them, for a Spanish xebec-frigate was moving along in full sail under the land, which, as soon as the *Speedy* came in sight, at once gave chase.

Lord Cochrane's men were so much of his own stamp that when in the preceding year he had played off his quarantine-flag on another frigate, they had grumbled at not being allowed to fight her, so now, though so many of the crew were absent in prizes that he had but fifty-four on board, including boys, he told them that they should not be disappointed again ; and, instead of trying to escape, he bore down to meet his pursuer. He tried to puzzle her captain for a moment by showing the American ensign, in order to get close to her before she should open her fire ; for, as his guns were only four-pounders, they would have been wholly useless at a distance. When he got as near as he desired he hoisted his own colours, and the action began. The frigate delivered two broadsides without effect ; he never fired a gun till he had run under her lee, and locked his yards among her rigging, when he directed his little broadside, treble shotted, up at her overhanging sides, and the first discharge killed her captain. He had reckoned that, in the position which he had taken up, her shot would necessarily go clean over his vessel, and so it proved ; but the Spaniards also soon found that out, and prepared to board. He was near enough to hear the order given, and baffled it by pushing off a few yards, delivering another broadside as he fell back. For an hour this singular contest was continued in this manner : the little Speedy closing up and firing ; retreating and firing ; always with deadly aim ; while the Spanish guns could not be depressed sufficiently to make any impression on her hull. However, they cut up her rigging so severely that at the end of an hour it became plain that she must alter the character of the contest, or, as Lord Cochrane expressed it to his men, they must either take the frigate or be taken. They were quite willing to take her. As a preparatory step he made half his crew blacken their faces, and then, giving up the helm to Mr. Guthrie, the doctor, the whole of the men who were unhurt (two had been

killed and four wounded) at once boarded a vessel whose crew outnumbered them six times over. The Spaniards were astonished, as well they might be: looking at the black faces which swarmed around them they took half their assailants for the devil and his imps, but they soon remembered themselves, and, fighting gallantly, seemed likely to overpower Cochrane and his handful of followers, when he, by a lucky thought, sent one of his men to haul down the Spanish colours. The Spaniards, without considering who had lowered them, thought all was over and submitted, and the British captain thus became master of the Gamo, a 32-gun frigate, with a crew of three hundred and nineteen men.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1801.

The Government sends out an expedition to explore the coast of Australia—Former explorers of that country : Cook, Vancouver, La Perouse, D'Entrecasteaux—The French Government gives the captain a passport—Dampier—De Nuyts—Previous career of Captain Flinders—His voyages with Mr. Bass—He sails through Bass's Straits—Reaches Australia—Astonishment of the natives at our military drill—Differences of language among the natives—Loses a boat's crew—Meets some French vessels—Discovers Port Philip—Reaches Port Jackson—Takes the *Lady Nelson* under his command—Sends her back—Extraordinary reef on the eastern coast—Passes through Torres Straits—Explores the Gulf of Carpentaria—Great stature of the natives—Meets traders from Macassar—Goes over to Timor—An American captain is establishing the slave-trade—Discovers the incorrectness of the account of the Trial rocks—Returns to Port Jackson along the southern coast—The Investigator is condemned—Flinders determines to return to England in the *Porpoise*—Is wrecked—Cowardly conduct of Captain Palmer, of the *Bridgwater*—He sails afresh in the *Cumberland*—Her defective condition—Puts in at Timor—At the Mauritius—Is thrown into prison by the governor—Captain Bergeret intercedes for him—Is kept prisoner six years and a half—Is released, and arrives in England—The French had published false accounts of their discoveries in South Australia—Flinders publishes his account of his voyage—His subsequent and present reputation.

It is a pleasing proof of the degree in which modern civilization mitigates even the most terrible calamities, that at the very moment that Britain and France were waging war upon one another with all the resources in their power and with an unprecedented animosity of feeling, the Government of one country should yet have felt confidence enough in the other to appeal to its rulers for their countenance to scientific enterprise, and that those so appealed to should have frankly and generously granted all that was desired. The vast island which now bears the name of Australia was as yet but imperfectly and partially known to European navigators ; French officers of great skill, acuteness, and

industry, La Perouse and D'Entrecasteaux, had followed not unworthily in the steps of our own Cook and Vancouver, but much still remained to be done : and, as each successive discovery only stimulated the eagerness of those interested in them to prosecute them to their completion, the Royal Society in London, in the course of the year 1800, pressed on the Board of Admiralty the desirableness of sending out an expedition for the express purpose of surveying the whole Australian coast. The plan was approved, but, as there would have been great danger in despatching an unarmed and unprotected ship to seas so constantly traversed by French cruisers, our Secretary of State, Lord Hawkesbury, applied to the authorities at Paris for a passport to protect the vessel which should be sent out from all hostilities, on the ground that its object was one calculated to extend the bounds of human knowledge, and consequently one in which all countries were equally concerned. The First Consul, Buonaparte, however unscrupulous in political intrigue, or in matters in which his own advancement or that of his family was concerned, was always sincere in his ardour for the promotion of science. He had recently sent a present of books to our Royal Society, and three years afterwards, at the very time when all England was ringing with reprobation of the unprecedented tyranny with which he had detained peaceful travellers who chanced to be within his dominions when he again declared war against us, he permitted an English gentleman to come to Paris to consult some Oriental manuscripts in the public library of Paris. Influenced by the same liberal spirit he now unhesitatingly granted Lord Hawkesbury's request\* and ordered the issue of a passport enjoining French officers of every description, whether holding commissions in the national navy, or commanding privateers, or exercising civil authority in the colonial dependencies of the republic, not only to abstain

\* See his 'Correspondence,' vol. x., p. 141, date Feb. 7, 1805.

from molesting men employed on a service calculated to be of such benefit to the world at large, but even to afford them active aid, should the disasters incidental to such a voyage compel them to seek a foreign port for the repair of their ships, or for rest, or provisions for themselves. One would rejoice to be able to add that the inferior officers of the Republic, for such was still in name the form of government subsisting in France, were imbued with the same spirit, but that, as will presently be seen, was far from being the case.

Australia, or, as it was formerly called, *Terra Australis*, had been visited by our early navigators, and among others by the celebrated Dampier, who, after having been, as a buccaneer, the terror of the Atlantic, reformed, settled down as a peaceful citizen, and was employed by William III. on voyages of discovery, for which his former adventurous life seemed in many respects to have especially fitted him. He visited it twice, and examined a great portion of the western coast; but he, like Tasman and the other Dutch travellers who were the original discoverers of the country, believed it to be a part of New Guinea, an opinion which prevailed after his time, till, as has been already mentioned, it was disproved by Cook. Cook's examination of the island was confined to its eastern side; and the southern shores, though they had been reached by Peter Nuyts\* as early as the year 1627, had been left unexplored since that time for more than a century and a half, till, in the year 1791, the British captain Vancouver touched at the south-western extremity of the island, and worked along the coast for a distance of about five hundred miles. The next year the French Admiral, M. d'Entre-

\* Nuyts is commonly called a seaman; but, as he was subsequently sent as ambassador to Japan, and shortly afterwards made governor of Formosa, it seems probable that he was rather a civilian, perhaps the principal merchant on board the ship that made the discovery. Whatever he may have been, it was his name that was given to the portion of Australia at which the ship touched.



casteaux, while searching for his countryman La Perouse, who is supposed to have been lost in those seas a year or two before, reached the same coast at almost the same point as Vancouver, and, as the winds were more favorable to him than they had proved to the British seaman, carried his investigations some degrees further to the eastward, though not so far as Nuyts had originally penetrated; and even he had scarcely seen half the southern shore, and no portion of what has since been proved to be the most valuable territory of the whole island.

Much therefore remained to be done; not only in the exploration of those parts of the coast which were wholly unknown, but also in the acquisition of a more accurate knowledge of what had been already visited: for the Dutch Government, from commercial jealousy, had desired to keep secret the discoveries which their sailors had made; and had, as far as was in their power, discountenanced the publication of them; while the charts which had been from time to time constructed were always incomplete, and often inaccurate. To supply what was defective, and to correct what was erroneous in our information respecting Australia, was the object of the expedition now to be sent out. A vessel named the *Investigator*, was equipped for the purpose, and it was placed under the command of Captain Flinders, whose instructions enjoined him to give a careful examination to every part of the coast; to take careful soundings; by careful astronomical observation to fix the true position of the most important bays and headlands; to note the tides and currents; to make as careful observation as circumstances would permit of the winds and weather prevailing at different seasons; and to search especially for good harbours. He was also directed to explore the country as far inland as he could, to trace the course of any rivers which he might discover, to gather every possible information respecting the fertility of the

soil, its natural products and capabilities ; and these last he was to illustrate by bringing home specimens of the various plants, trees, and shrubs which he might find. His attention was also carefully directed to the manners and customs of the natives and to any alteration which might have taken place in them since the first visits of Europeans to their country. Persons competent to carry out these various inquiries, an astronomer, a naturalist, a draughtsman, a gardener, and a miner, were attached to the expedition ; nor was anything omitted which, in the judgment of its chief promoters, could tend to its success.

Flinders himself was a man eminently fitted to have the conduct of such an enterprise, not only from his general habits, and the particular character of his abilities, but because he had already acquired a considerable knowledge of a portion of the country which he was now to explore. Our first settlement on the eastern coast had been made thirteen years before, when Captain Philip was sent out as the first governor of the colony which we proposed to establish at Botany Bay ; but which he, on a further examination of the coast, transferred to Port Jackson. When, in 1795, he was succeeded by Captain Hunter, Mr. Flinders was a midshipman in the *Reliance*, one of two small sloops which the new governor took out with him as the naval force of the new settlement ; and the vessels had scarcely reached Australia when he applied to his captain for permission to explore the adjacent districts. He was joined in his request by Mr. Bass, the surgeon of the *Reliance*, a man of great resolution and sagacity ; and Captain Hunter was sufficiently inclined to grant it, but it was easier to give his consent than to supply the adventurers with adequate means to accomplish their objects. The largest boat which he could spare them was one appropriately named *Tom Thumb*, as being but eight feet long ; and the whole crew, besides themselves, was a single boy.

Yet in this pigmy vessel they proceeded down the coast, worked their way up George's river to a point far beyond that which had been previously reached by any of our people, and though the natives were known to be savage in disposition, and were even reported to be cannibals, they ventured to trust themselves among them ; and Flinders, part of whose equipment consisted of a pair of scissors, won their good will by cutting their hair and trimming their beards. He and his companions made several expeditions in the *Tom Thumb*, in one of which they were able to verify the important discovery, made a little time before by a shipwrecked officer of the name of Clarke, that the cliffs contained coal ; and the energy and ability which Flinders displayed in the *Tom Thumb* induced the governor to give him a larger vessel. In an expedition, which on one occasion Mr. Bass had undertaken without Mr. Flinders, he had been led to believe that the district at the south-eastern corner of Australia known as Van Diemen's Land, was a separate island ; and in 1798 Captain Hunter sent Flinders in the *Norfolk*, a colonial sloop of twenty-five tons, to ascertain the correctness of Mr. Bass's conjecture. Bass accompanied him, and soon had the pleasure of finding the opinion he had expressed entirely confirmed. The *Norfolk* sailed to the strait which separates Van Diemen's Land from the district now known as Victoria, and to which Flinders appropriately gave the name of his sagacious friend. They made the circuit of the smaller island, examining the southern coast with more care than time had permitted them to bestow on the northern shores ; explored Port Arthur and the lower part of the River Derwent, and then returned to Port Jackson.

On another occasion Flinders sailed to the northward, and examined the country around Moreton Bay, ascertaining that the navigation was dangerous from the numbers of reefs and shoals which fringe the coast ; and that explora-

tions by land were almost equally unsafe, from the ferocious disposition of the natives, against whom he was more than once obliged to use his fire-arms in self-defence. Still these short excursions necessarily allowed time for only a superficial examination of either sea or land; and therefore it was with no ordinary pleasure that, on his return to England, Flinders received his promotion as commander, and at the same time the command of the *Investigator*, with, as he believed, ample means for prosecuting and extending his previous discoveries in the most complete manner. His vessel was abundantly equipped with everything which he himself, or those men of science who had been the especial promoters of the expedition judged to be requisite or desirable for its entire success, and his crew consisted of eighty-eight picked men. The East India Company were not without a share in her equipment, giving the chief officers the substantial aid of a liberal grant of money to provide for their table. On the 18th of July he sailed from Spithead, and, having a generally favorable voyage, he reached the south-western point of Australia on the 7th of December. He had practised all the means which Cook had recommended for preserving the health of his crew with great exactness, and with such success that, with the exception of the astronomer, Mr. Crossley, who appears to have been of a weak constitution, and who was taken so ill that it became necessary to leave him at the Cape of Good Hope, he had not a single case of sickness throughout the voyage. He at once applied himself to a minute examination of the coast, beginning at Cape Leeuwin, the point at which he first touched, and thence proceeding eastward till he reached King George's Sound, where he anchored the *Investigator*, and prepared to commence his inland investigations. A sheet of copper affixed to a tree showed him by an inscription on its face that an English trading-vessel, called the *Elgood*, had put into the same bay sixteen months before, but apparently the

crew had not penetrated far into the country, since the natives whom Flinders met with were as shy and timid as if they had never seen any white men before. As soon, however, as they perceived that no harm was intended them, they grew more confident, and came among the sailors freely ; and their confidence grew into positive delight when the captain drew up a small body of marines who formed part of his crew, on the shore, and put them through their drill. The red coats and white cross-belts they looked on as the white man's war paint, and when the marines began the musket-exercise, shouldering, grounding, and presenting arms, an old native who seemed to be a kind of chief, placed himself by their side with a stick, copying every evolution, and showing the greatest complacency at his new accomplishment. Either Flinders was able to make some explanation of what was about to happen intelligible to them, or they had seen guns before, since, when the men fired their volleys, they showed no signs of alarm ; but the drum and fife were evidently new to them, and they made no attempt to conceal the admiring astonishment with which they heard the music.

As Flinders proceeded inland, he found, as Vancouver had found before him, coral rocks rising up through the sand, from which he inferred that the district must have been beneath the sea at no very remote period : while from the ducks and swans which he saw, he also argued that fresh water must be to be found at no great distance. He saw plenty of feathered game, but no beasts except the kangaroo. The sea was full of large and excellent fish, and the shore abounded with oysters ; but, though the natives were addicted to hunting, they did not appear acquainted with the art of fishing : indeed they had no boats of any kind, nor did any of the trees in that part of the country show signs of having been stripped of their bark for the purpose of canoe-building. In his former voyages Flinders had learnt something of the language in use on the eastern

coast, but though in their outward characteristics the natives of the south-west resembled those of Port Jackson, in speech they were totally different. He also found greater difficulty in pronouncing their words than he had met with at Port Jackson; but he remarked that the natives of both districts were equally at a loss in pronouncing certain English letters. In personal appearance they resembled a middle-sized Englishman; their skin was of a dark coffee-colour; and they wore no clothes but a short cloak of kangaroo skin thrown over their shoulders.

From King George's Sound Flinders coasted along towards the east; as he went, carefully constructing a chart of the navigation, which the clusters of rocks, reefs, and islets among which he was forced to thread his way rendered not only difficult but dangerous. He was embarrassed, too, by an extraordinary degree of variation in the compass, which at last, as it greatly exceeded all previous experience, he attributed to an unusual degree of magnetic attraction possessed by the islands themselves, and subsequent observations confirmed him in this opinion. The rise of the tide throughout the greater portion of the way was very slight; and high-water occurred only once in the twenty-four hours. Altogether his view of the western half of the southern coast was unfavourable: at one part the sea was fringed by a vast uninterrupted ridge of rocks, extending nearly a hundred and fifty leagues, and from four hundred to six hundred feet high, along the whole extent of which no place was seen in which a ship could take refuge from a storm; and which were of an appearance so uniform as to present not a single object on which an explorer like himself could fix as a landmark for himself, or for those after him whom he might wish to aid by his guidance. As far as the recent French navigators had gone, he found their descriptions and charts of the coast admirably correct; but when he got beyond this rocky bight they failed him altogether; and from about the 130th degree of East

longitude he may fairly claim the title of a discoverer ; the lands between that point and the south-eastern corner of the island being the most accessible and the most valuable of the whole coast.

He kept an eager look out for rivers, weighing the water at different inlets, in order to ascertain by that test whether any considerable body of fresh water were mingled with the sea ; and, as he found that not to be the case, he naturally concluded that there could be no rivers of importance in the district along which he was passing ; while the flocks of teal and wild duck, which he still saw around him, appeared to prove that there must be some fresh-water lakes at no great distance. When he reached the 135th degree of longitude, the coast, which now trended considerably to the southward, began also to assume a different character ; the tide ran with some strength, and with such a swell, that one of the Investigator's boats was upset, and all her crew, among whom was the master, Mr. Thistle, were lost. The population on the mainland seemed more numerous, though the adjacent islands were totally uninhabited ; of which, if the Captain's belief was correct, they on one occasion had a singular proof. A couple of white eagles watched a party of his men, and appeared inclined to pounce upon them, mistaking them, as Flinders believed, for kangaroos, because they had never seen any other animal walking erect on its hind legs.

He examined Spencer's Gulf, and Gulf St. Vincent, with great care ; and had hardly quitted the latter, when he met a strange ship, which proved to be the French *Géographe*, bound, like the *Investigator*, on a voyage of discovery, which she was prosecuting in the opposite direction, working from West to East. Her captain, M. Baudin, had been surveying the southern and eastern coast of Van Diemen's Land, to which our own countrymen were hastening ; and he, also, had lost a boat's crew and had parted company with his consort, the *Naturaliste*. He had acquired considerable information about Van

Diemen's Land, which he imparted freely to our adventurers : and, in an account of his voyage, which M. Peron, the naturalist, attached to his expedition, subsequently published, he, or M. Peron on his behalf, laid claim to the discovery of the larger half of the southern coast of Australia, giving it the name of Terre Napoleon ; and in like manner giving other French appellations to places which Flinders had already visited, and had distinguished by English titles. The French are well entitled to the praise of having been among the most diligent and acute contributors to almost every branch of scientific knowledge ; but it cannot be denied that they have at all times shown a disposition to arrogate even more than is due to them, and to encroach unduly on the claims of others ; and at no time has this national failing been more conspicuous than during the period of their Revolution, which would seem to have eradicated every sentiment of honour from the breasts of a great portion of their people. Nothing can be more undeniable than the argument of Captain Flinders, that the discoveries made by M. Baudin in this voyage terminate at the point where he was met by the Investigator ; to which, in honour of their meeting, the British captain gave the name of Encounter Bay.

Towards the end of April, Flinders reached the entrance to Bass's Straits, and came upon the large island now called King's Island, which M. Baudin had not seen, and of which he was even inclined to deny the existence. Yet it is of considerable size, and some of its hills were nearly five hundred feet high, and were visible at a distance of twenty-five miles. But it did not appear to be inhabited, and, having fixed its exact position by careful observations, Flinders contented himself with a cursory examination of its coast, and bore up to the land on the northern side of the straits, which he reached at Cape Otway, and from that point explored with great minuteness the seaboard of the district now known as Victoria. He could



not anticipate that, at no distant period, it was to amaze the whole world with the riches it hid beneath its surface ; but the absence of rocks and sand, the rich green of the woods which sloped down to the water's edge, and the plains of rich grass, led him unhesitatingly to pronounce it the most fertile part of the island that he had as yet seen : and a day or two afterwards he discovered the capacious harbour of Port Philip, which, singularly enough, had also escaped the observation of M. Baudin, and by this discovery gave a character of commercial importance to the province, without which the greatest agricultural productiveness would have been of little value. He subsequently learnt that he was not the earliest discoverer of the harbour, since it had been entered by Lieutenant Murray, in the *Lady Nelson*, a brig from Port Jackson, nearly three months before ; but he was the first to examine its shores, to sound its depths, and to ascertain the character of the land around. He made several excursions on shore in the hope of finding some river ; but in this object he failed ; and he began to perceive, what subsequent experience has confirmed, that the great defect of the island is a want of water. He had considerable intercourse with the natives, whom he found not only friendly, but more desirous than any other savages whom he had met to profit by European arts and conveniences. They seemed, like the inhabitants of the western district, wholly ignorant of navigation ; and it was very remarkable that, though in appearance they resembled the natives of other parts of the island, their language, as far as he could understand it, was altogether different from that in use at King George's Island to the westward, or at Port Jackson to the eastward. The climate he found very favorable ; it was nearly mid-winter, yet the thermometer never fell below sixty-one, nor on the warmest days did it rise above six degrees. He predicted that we should soon establish a settlement there ; but a generation passed away before his prophecy was fulfilled. In consequence, indeed, of his report,

Colonel Collins was sent out to found a colony at the head of Port Phillip, but the want of rivers induced him to leave it, and, in preference, to establish himself at the mouth of the Derwent, at the south-eastern corner of Van Diemen's Land: and it was an emigrant from Hobart Town who, more than thirty years afterwards, became the founder of Melbourne.

After a stay of a week, of which not a moment had been lost, Flinders hastened along the coast to Port Jackson, where he expected to find the *Lady Nelson*, which his original orders instructed him to take likewise under his command. She was a vessel of sixty tons' burden, but drew so little water that she was expected to prove particularly useful in exploring any rivers or canals that might be found. He made some alterations in her to fit her for her new employment; put the *Investigator* through a course of thorough repair; and, by the Governor's permission, replaced the boats' crew, whom he had lost at Cape Catastrophe, by some convicts who had originally been seafaring men in England, and who were now offered a chance of retrieving their characters and recovering their position. So successful had been his sanitary regulations, that, though almost a year had elapsed since his departure from England, he had but one man unfit for duty from ill-health, though he was forced also to discharge another who, like Hector M'Intyre, had engaged in an encounter with a seal, and had come off from it with even worse fortune, having been disabled by a severe wound in the leg. He took on board also two natives, Nanboree and Bongaree, the latter of whom had sailed with him in the *Norfolk* four years before, and both of whom were calculated to be of great service in opening communications with the natives of the unknown lands to which he was about to proceed.

His course on leaving Port Jackson was hardly de-

terminated by his own choice. July, when he set sail, is midwinter at the Antipodes; and throughout the winter months, and indeed during nearly three quarters of the year, the wind usually blows so steadily from the west, as to render it very difficult to work along the southern coast in the opposite direction to that by which he had come. His instructions also especially enjoined him to examine Torres' Strait and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Thither therefore he now proceeded. As he passed up the eastern shore, he found reason to confirm Cook's account of it as barren and unpromising; and corrected the bearings of different headlands and capes, which the imperfection of his instruments had prevented that great navigator from laying down with entire accuracy. The navigation became dangerous from the reefs and shoals with which the whole coast is fringed; and also from the tides which, in many places, rise very high and run with great strength; the currents too having much greater force five or six leagues from the shore than close to the land. At first wherever he touched he found the natives friendly, but, when he reached the tropics, they began to show a hostile disposition, pelting our boats with stones; though they were easily dispersed by the sound of a few muskets which our men fired over their heads. They seemed also to be of a more adventurous character than those in the south, since canoes and fishing-implements were seen on the shore. The Percy Isles bore many proofs of being visited by them, though rather as an occasional fishing-station, than as a permanent abode. And, as he approached Cape York, at the entrance of Torres' Strait, three canoes loaded with men came out to meet the ship, the men being armed with bows of such strength, that, as was afterwards found, none of our sailors could bend them, and with arrows four feet in length. Flinders, remembering that, some years before, these people had attacked

some English ships, stood at first on his defence ; loaded the guns, and kept the marines under arms ; but it was soon seen that the object of the natives was rather to open a traffic with us. He was somewhat disappointed at finding that they could not understand Bongaree's language, but a reciprocity of objects surmounted the want of an interpreter ; a scale of prices was soon arranged, and cowrie necklaces, and pearl oyster shells were with mutual satisfaction exchanged for nails, hammers, and above all for hatchets.

Before reaching Cape York he had come to one very extraordinary reef, or chain of reefs, lying at a distance varying from nine to thirty leagues from the shore, and running nearly parallel to it with very little interruption for a distance of six or seven hundred miles. He was between them and the mainland when he first discovered them, and he sailed three hundred and fifty miles before he found any gap, through which he could pass with safety into the open sea. He compared it to the reefs which enclose one side of the Gulf of Florida, and which, though infinitely inferior in extent, have this point of similarity with that behind which he was now enclosed, that they both consist of coral. Here at last the ultimate success of his voyage began to be threatened. The *Lady Nelson* got aground, and was so much injured that he was forced to send her back, and the *Investigator* became very leaky ; but, in spite of all difficulties, he persevered worked his way through Torres' Strait, and on the first of November the Gulf of Carpentaria was laid open to his view. Cook in the *Endeavour*, and Bligh in the *Bounty's* launch, had both been here before him, but neither of them had had their attention especially directed to the Gulf itself ; nor had they had time for researches as careful as he now prepared to make. Here, as on many other parts of the coast, were seen mounds which Dampier and others who had remarked

them on the western coast had taken for native dwellings ; but which were now ascertained to be gigantic ant-hills, and, though above eight feet high, had been constructed by an insect which Flinders pronounces both sluggish and feeble. The Strait itself he did not stop to examine minutely, thinking it of importance to get clear of it before the north-west monsoon, which, at that period of the year, was daily to be expected, and being satisfied with proving that it could be traversed with safety in less than three days, which gave it a great advantage over the passage previously preferred, through Dampier's Strait on the northern side of New Guinea.

Keeping close to the shore he made his way to the very head of the gulf without meeting with anything worth notice : once only he saw some natives, who were so shy that, though he tied a hatchet to a tree as a sort of sign that his ship was a shop where more iron-wares might be procured, he could not tempt them to any closer intercourse ; and the land itself was so sandy and barren as to afford no inducement to explore it. On one small island, to which, in honour of the miner attached to the expedition, he gave the name of Allen's Isle, he had better fortune, procuring in exchange for hatchets and red nightcaps, which were no sooner seen than they were greatly admired and coveted, some of the arms, such as spears, and "womeraks," or throwing-sticks used by the natives ; which must have been formidable weapons in such hands, since the men were of a stature seen in no other country except Patagonia. By measurement with the English sailors, Flinders judged them to be at least six feet three in height ; nor could he find any fault with their muscular proportions, except that their legs were thin. They seemed however, in spite of their size and strength, to be of a peaceful disposition, and their spears were, to all appearance, mainly employed against the turtle, with which the

adjacent waters abounded, and which, with oysters, made their principal food. Some of the larger islands supplied also a variety of birds, ducks, and bustards, which afforded the sailors a seasonable supply of fresh meat. He was surprised at seeing traces of men, but no men, till he found that they lived in caves underground, in which they hid themselves at the approach of our boats ; and on one island he saw proofs that it had been visited by Europeans, in the mark of iron tools on the trees. He examined the mainland more strictly than even the islands, hoping perhaps to find at the head of the gulf some inlet, or strait : but he soon became convinced that nothing of the kind existed ; and, as soon as he had made this certain, he proceeded with all speed up the western shore of the gulf. He carefully surveyed the whole coast of the large island to which the Dutch had given the name of Groote Eyland, but found nothing worthy of particular remark, though he noticed that here, as on the south-western side of the country, there was very little rise of the tide, and high water only once a-day. The natives he found generally friendly ; and though at one point some of his men were attacked and one severely wounded by a party armed with spears, so that in self-defence they were forced to fire on their assailants, he believed that the quarrel arose from no intentional malice on their part, but from their misunderstanding of the movements of the wounded officer, whom they suspected of a design to seize their arms.

He spent three months in his examination of the entire gulf, intending, as soon as he got clear of it, to proceed westward, so as to circumnavigate the entire country of Australia. It was singular that at the north-west, soon after he quitted the gulf, he met with natives who understood Bongaree's language, which to others by far nearer to Port Jackson had proved unintelligible. But the intercourse which this circumstance facilitated

was not without its drawbacks, since his new friends proved inveterate thieves ; and at last Flinders was forced to have recourse to the same expedient which Cook had employed in the Pacific, and seized one of the natives as a hostage for the restitution of the stolen property. A little further on, the Port Jackson language again ceased to be understood ; one or two words indeed which he met with were the same as those used by the natives at that settlement, but the greater part were, in his judgment, radically different, though he did not consider that the diversity of language proved a diversity of race. At the extreme westerly corner of the gulf he found a fine harbour, which had escaped the notice of the Dutch, the only previous visitors of this part of the coast, to which he gave the name of Melville Bay, and in favour of which he has recorded that it affords a good anchorage in every part ; and also that its shores supply an abundance of large garnets of fine colour.

He had not got far to the westward when he encountered a large body of other visitors, whom, on inquiry, he found to be traders from Macassar, who were in the habit of making a yearly voyage to the North Australian coast, to procure a fish which they called "trepane," but which our men knew as the sea-cucumber ; and which they dried and smoked and then conveyed to the large neighbouring island of Timor for the Chinese market. He left them and proceeded onwards ; but soon afterwards the wind set in so strongly from the south-west, that it drove him also towards Timor ; and, knowing that the Dutch had a settlement at Coepang at its eastern extremity, he determined to go thither, to replenish his store of provisions, a portion of which was greatly damaged by the leaky state of his ship. Nearly four months before, while at the head of the Gulf of Carpentaria, she had made so much water that he had been forced to have her carefully examined,

and the carpenter, reporting her to be too rotten to repair, had stated her lasting for any period longer than six months to depend on the continuance of fine weather, and the absence of any accident ; should she get aground he believed that she would at once go to pieces. It had therefore been an act of no ordinary hardihood to proceed onwards in her after such a report, but Flinders was of opinion that she had not become worse since that time ; though he thought also that the probability of his men having to endure excessive toil at the pumps rendered it very desirable for him to procure plenty of wholesome food for them. At Timor accordingly he revictualled his ship, and, finding a Dutch brig there, he sent home by her captain a full account of his discoveries up to that time ; and of the state of the Investigator, which rendered it impossible for her to do any further service. He also met an American captain who, at a little island in the neighbourhood called Solor, had opened what promised to be a very profitable slave-trade on a small scale. He had bought men for about eighteen shillings a-piece ; and expected to get from twenty to five-and-twenty pounds for them at Batavia, which was less than a thousand miles distant. Providence however disappointed the American's calculations : at one of the ports at which he touched on his way, some of his crew caught a fever, and the greater part of them and the cargo died before they reached their promised market.

Flinders's voyage to Timor was not wholly unprovided for in his original instructions ; since he had been directed to ascertain the exact position of a reef, known as the Trial Rocks, because, nearly two centuries before, an English vessel of that name had been lost there ; and of a shoal or sandbank, which was understood to stretch from that reef towards Timor. He, however, found neither rocks nor bank ; and laid it down as certain that, if any such existed, they were not in the situation assigned to them by



former report. And having satisfied himself of this, he bore down directly for Cape Leeuwin, which he reached in the middle of May, and hence proceeded along the southern coast with all speed for Port Jackson. It had become necessary for him to reach it soon, for all his precautions had been insufficient to preserve his crew in health. Since leaving Timor the greater part of them had been attacked with dysentery ; some, and among them one or two of his most valuable men, had died, nor had he himself escaped the infection. But a few days' rest recruited his strength, and he began at once to consider of the possibility of starting on a fresh voyage. He found, however, that it was wholly impracticable ; a strict survey of the Investigator resulted in her being condemned as wholly unsafe. For the moment his discoveries were over, but he felt that his instructions were not yet fully executed, and he was unwilling to abandon the hope of carrying them out, and so justifying the confidence which had been placed in him. And with this view, after a consideration of several alternatives, he decided, with the full approbation of Governor King of Port Jackson, on returning to England as a passenger on board a small homeward-bound king's ship, named the Porpoise, to solicit the command of another and a sounder ship, in which he might return and complete his task.

We now cease to speak of Captain Flinders as a discoverer ; but the dangers and disasters which he met with on his way home are too remarkable to be passed over in silence. He quitted Port Jackson on the 10th of August, in company with two other small ships, the Bridgwater and the Cato ; but on that day week the Porpoise and Cato both struck on a reef, and for some hours it seemed as if they would both go to pieces, and as if all on board would be lost without a chance of aid. Without a chance of aid, for their consort, the East India Company's ship Bridgwater, the largest ship of the three, commanded by a man whom, unknown as he probably

was, it is well to hold up to his deserved infamy, Mr. E. H. Palmer, deserted them the moment he saw the danger. He comforted himself on his arrival at Calcutta by announcing their total destruction; but it was a signal instance of a just retribution for so much cowardice and treachery, that, of the three vessels, he and his crew alone were really lost. The crews of the Porpoise and Cato were rescued, but the Bridgwater, after it left India for England, was never heard of again.

Meantime the danger and distress of those on the reef was terrible, but their officers were not men to despair nor to lose time. Their vessels themselves were destroyed; but within half a mile of the reef was a sandbank, offering a sufficient and safe resting-place for the whole company during the continuance of fine weather. The destruction of the vessels appeared to place Captain Flinders, as the senior officer, in command of the crews of both ships. Under his direction the stores of the wrecked ships were removed to the sandbank: a tent was pitched, and, leaving the main body on the bank under Lieutenant Fowler, commander of the Porpoise, Flinders himself undertook to return in an open boat to Port Jackson to report their situation to the governor, and to procure them means of immediate rescue. In spite of unexpectedly boisterous weather, he entirely succeeded in his bold enterprise. In less than a fortnight he reached the settlement. The governor sympathised with his misfortunes, and with the perils of those whom he had left behind. The captain of the Rolla, a vessel bound for China, was easily persuaded to call at the reef and take on board the shipwrecked crews, and a small schooner, the Cumberland, was given to Flinders himself, in which to proceed to England, after having guided the Rolla to his comrades, and seen their deliverance ensured.

Few bolder enterprises have been undertaken in modern

times than that of traversing the ocean from the Antipodes to England in such a vessel as the Cumberland. As her new captain describes her, she "was something less than a Gravesend passage-boat, being only of twenty-nine tons burthen," and the entire crew which she could contain amounted to only eleven men besides himself. She had no room to stow provisions sufficient for the voyage, so that he was compelled to anticipate at least five stoppages to revictual; nevertheless, so ardent was his desire to reach home, in the hope of there procuring a fresh ship in which to complete his discoveries, that as she bore "the character of being a strong, good little sea-boat, he did not hesitate to undertake the voyage in her." He very soon found, to his sorrow, that her character for strength was undeserved; but no misgivings of the kind oppressed him when, on the 21st of September, he set sail. He started with bad omens; the very next day the wind, though fair, became very fresh, and twenty-four hours' encounter with the heavy sea showed him not only that the Cumberland leaked, but that her pumps were nearly useless; the very first day of his voyage he was forced to run into a small bay for shelter, with his ship in such a plight, that two hours more of exposure to the weather, though it was far short of being a storm, might have proved fatal to her. The next day he again set sail, eager above all things to secure the deliverance of his shipwrecked comrades on the sandbank; but now he found that, as long as the wind continued fresh, the Cumberland could carry very little sail "without danger of oversetting;" and the Rolla was forced from time to time to back her topsails to avoid losing her company. With untiring perseverance, however, he held on his way, and on the 7th of October he reached his friends, who were anxiously looking for him. We cannot form a better idea of the unfitness of the Cumberland for her voyage, than by recollecting that she

was three days longer in reaching the reef from Port Jackson, than Flinders had been in traversing the same distance in an open boat.

Three days were spent in removing the shipwrecked men, with such provisions and stores as had been saved, into the Rolla, and on the 11th of October the two ships left the reef and parted company; the Rolla pursuing her voyage to China, and the Cumberland bearing her adventurous captain towards home. He passed safely through Torres' Strait, often taking soundings as he went, as a guide to those who should come after him, but sometimes obliged to keep further from the land than he could have wished, lest the small size of his vessel should tempt the savages to attack her, as they more than once showed a disposition to do.

He again touched at Coepang, but by this time the Cumberland had become so leaky, that he was forced to abandon his idea of revictualling her at Batavia, which lay too wide of his track, and to decide on steering for the Mauritius. Governor King, not wishing to encourage any communication between the French colonies and our own in those southern seas, had expressed a strong desire that he should avoid that island, and he was not very willing to disregard that officer's wish. But he knew that the Cape of Good Hope had been restored to the Dutch, and he had no great opinion of their zeal for the encouragement of science, or of their friendliness to those engaged in enterprises for that object; and, even should the war between France and England have been renewed, of which he had no certain intelligence, though he was aware that such an event was far from improbable, he relied on his passport to protect him. He was painfully undeceived: General de Caen, the Governor of the Mauritius at that time, was an ignorant man, of brutal temper; one of the worst specimens of those whom the convulsions of the Revolution raised to high military rank; having no mili-

tary reputation, he thought the best proof of courage was to display an unreasoning hatred of England and the English ; and when, in the middle of December, Flinders arrived at Port Louis, and claimed permission to repair his vessel sufficiently to enable him to proceed in safety to England, he, on the plea that the passport was granted to the Investigator, and not to the Cumberland, seized the vessel, and threw the captain and his crew into prison. Such an act was felt at once throughout the island to be wholly unbecoming the French character. Many of the principal inhabitants tried to shake the Governor's purpose ; among others, Captain Bergeret, who has already been mentioned in these pages as one of the most gallant officers in the French navy, and who happened to be at this time cruising off the island, made vigorous exertions in Flinders's favour ; as did M. Baudin, the brother of the captain of the *Géographe* ; the captain himself was dead, but M. Baudin bore eager witness to the friendship and assistance which that officer had received at Port Jackson, and protested against the unworthy return which General De Caen was now making for that hospitality. The Governor-General of India would fain have had Flinders included in a cartel for the exchange of prisoners, but De Caen refused to grant this indulgence, on the plea that he was not a prisoner of war ; and when, on learning the facts, the French Government sent out an order for the release of the Cumberland and her crew, he contrived, on some pretext or other, to elude compliance with that order, and kept him a prisoner for more than six years. At the end of twenty months he did so far relax the severity with which he had previously treated his captive, as to grant him permission to live on parole in the interior of the island, but to no application for his liberty would he listen from any quarter whatever. Four years afterwards, when it was known that a British squadron was preparing to attack the island, the comparative liberty which the captain and other English

prisoners in the island had enjoyed was withdrawn, and they were again committed to close confinement.

The apprehensions, however, that had been thus excited in his breast, died away for a time, but at last, in March, 1810, the Governor, having apparently received a repetition of the command to release Flinders, in terms which he could no longer venture to disobey, sent him word that he might return to England with other prisoners, who were obtaining their liberty by exchange, "on condition of not serving in a hostile manner against France or her allies during the continuance of the war." Flinders had no difficulty in giving an undertaking not to act as he never had acted; but a day or two afterwards, a descent made by Captain Willoughby on the southern side of the island, threw General De Caen into such a paroxysm of rage, that there seemed some danger of the permission thus given being recalled. It was not recalled, however, and at last, on the 13th of June, Flinders, with about fifty other English prisoners, sailed for England. Even now, however, he was unable to procure the restitution of all his journals and other papers, on which the Governor had laid his hands when he seized himself; but he made light of all minor vexations in his joy at recovering his liberty, of which he had almost begun to despair. At the end of October he reached England, from which he had been absent nearly ten years. He found that, during his captivity, the French had endeavoured to filch from him the credit of his discoveries on the Southern Coast of Australia; giving, as has been already mentioned, French names to the most important places and districts; and their Government had endeavoured, as far as lay in its power, to stamp these pretensions with official seal, by promoting the officers of the *Géographe* and *Naturaliste*, professedly as a reward for their successful exertions. But, as soon as Flinders arrived in England, he applied himself with

diligence to publish his own account of what he himself had discovered; and his simple narrative, confirmed as it was by the undeniable evidence of the time and place of his meeting with Captain Baudin, completely overthrew the boast of the Frenchmen, and established his reputation as a most careful and successful explorer; whose discoveries are doubly valuable, partly for their own intrinsic importance, and partly for the proofs which they afford of the resolution of an English sailor to perform the duties entrusted to him to discharge, in spite of all dangers and difficulties.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1803—1804.

Renewal of the war—Admiral Cornwallis watches Brest—English squadrons bombard Dieppe and Calais—Nelson is appointed to the command in the Mediterranean—His multifarious duties—He takes his station off Cape Sicie—Bad condition of his fleet—We take Sainte Lucie, Tobago, and other settlements in the West Indies—Admiral Ranier baffles Admiral Linois at Pondicherry—Loss of the *Minerve*—Buonaparte is made Emperor—Revives his project of invading England—Our preparations—Loss of the *Vincejo*—Fate of Captain Wright—Skirmish off Boulogne—Failure of the *Catamarins*—Napoleon's plans for the Brest fleet—It remains in harbour—Sir E. Pellew watches Ferrol—M. Latouche Treville at Toulon—His boastfulness—Nelson sends Captain Keats to Algiers—Submission of the Dey—Nelson's proposal to establish a corps of marine artillery—Spanish policy—Capture of the Spanish treasure ships—Declaration of war by Spain—Repulse of Linois by Captain Dance—He is again beaten off by the *Centurion*—Captain Hardinge cuts out the *Atalante*—Capture of *L'Egyptienne*.

THE peace of Amiens was not definitely concluded till March, 1802, but from the time of the signature of the preliminary articles all warlike operations were suspended on both sides. It was, however, but a feverish and uncertain tranquillity which was thus created, and the war had hardly been terminated when it began to be seen that the flames of mutual suspicion and animosity which had been burning so fiercely and so long, were smothered rather than extinguished, were sure soon to be rekindled, and were ready indeed to break out at any moment. It belongs not to the present history to trace either the progress of the mutual jealousies which gradually determined the French Consul to renew the war, and at the same time prepared the English people to accept it; to



dwell upon the arts by which Buonaparte procured the extension of his consular authority, and its establishment for his life ; upon his intrigues in Holland, Switzerland, and Piedmont, and on the revolutions which he brought about in each of those countries ; nor upon the indignation which he feigned when he found that these transactions were considered in England irrefragable proofs of his designing bad faith, though this imputation was sanctioned and even enforced by the statesmen who, during the past war, had uniformly taken his part, and had bitterly blamed the ministers for hesitating to trust with implicit confidence in his single-minded frankness and sincerity. Nor need we here stop to explain, nor condescend to justify, our resolution not wantonly to disarm ourselves and to put a sword into the hands of France, by carrying out the articles which provided for the cession of Malta, till it should be rendered plain that to cede that all-important island would not be to deliver it into the hands of the First Consul. As it happened in the case of the wolf and the lamb, the moderate but firm language which our ministers held on the different points in dispute only seemed the more bitterly to exasperate the General, who thought war indispensable to the enhancement of his renown and the consolidation of his power, and who was determined to begin that war with us. At last he openly and violently insulted our ambassador at a party invited on purpose\* to make the premeditated outrage more conspicuous and more intolerable.

War was not actually declared till the middle of May, 1803, but for two months before, from the day when Buonaparte delivered himself of his premeditated attack upon our minister, both nations had been making vigorous preparations for the renewal of hostilities, so that the very

\* “ Au cercle de Madame Bonaparte, il a saisi l'occasion d'exprimer sa juste indignation devant une assemblée faite pour donner de l'éclat à ses paroles.”—*Despatch to M. Hedouville, the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg.* ‘Correspondance de Napoleon I.,’ vol. viii. p. 250.

moment that war was declared, both had armaments ready to carry it on, in its naval portion at least, with considerable activity. We showed that we were in earnest by at once sending squadrons off Brest and Toulon to watch the first departure of the French from their harbours, and to bring them to action at the earliest opportunity. Admiral Cornwallis had been for some time in command of the Channel fleet, and on the 17th of May, the very day after we issued our declaration of war against France, he repaired with ten sail of the line to Ushant, as the most favourable position in which to await the appearance of any force which might issue from Brest. At least twenty-five sail of the line, with a corresponding number of frigates, were lying in different stages of preparation in that splendid harbour, but they never moved; and during the whole of this year scarcely a single frigate quitted any of the French ports which open on the British channel or the Atlantic. Partly for want of something better to do, and partly in the hope of provoking the enemy to issue from their harbours, we sent in at different times squadrons to bombard Dieppe, Granville, and Calais, each of which, besides its own forts and batteries, held in its harbour a small force of gunboats, whose fire aided it in replying to our attack. Such operations were not, and hardly could be, productive of any important result, and may be passed over with the simple mention of their having taken place.

A more important command was that in the Mediterranean, and thither, therefore, the Government sent Nelson; though the fleet which they placed under his command was so scanty, and in such poor condition, that it would rather seem that they trusted to his genius to make up for all deficiencies, than that they had exerted themselves to give him a force worthy of his reputation, and adequate to the performance of the deeds which they expected from him. It was a most extensive command,

and one beset with the most complicated political difficulties. Of our own possessions, the safety of Gibraltar and Malta depended on his vigilance. On the southern coast he had to repress the insolence of the Algerines, and to act as best he could on the alternate fear and bravado of the other Mahometan governments. The interests of all the different states of Italy were also entrusted to him ; and so strange was the condition in which they were, that it was no easy matter to determine which were friendly, which neutral, which under the influence of France, and being so, incurably hostile ; while, even in those which were best disposed to us, such as Sicily, the distress, and consequent discontent of the common people, the tyranny, vacillation and intrigues of the nobles, and the corruption of all, made the task of so dealing with them as to render their own resources available for their own defence, one of the greatest difficulty. His instructions also charged him to keep an eye on the Morea, where French agents were known to be intriguing with some of the most influential of the Greeks, to induce them to revolt against their Turkish governors, and to establish a republic under the protection of the First Consul ; and it seemed probable that these machinations had been set on foot in concert with Russia, and that that power, which had for some time shown its desire to dismember the Turkish empire, now conceived that that end might be secured by an union with France. In Nelson's own opinion, too, he had still to protect our Indian empire and our own shores, since, though he considered that, whenever the French fleet should quit Toulon, it might have "as many destinations as there are countries," he nevertheless felt a conviction that its object would be either Egypt (as a stepping-stone to India) or, still more probably, Ireland.

Yet for all these laborious and various duties, the whole force placed under his command by the Govern-

ment did not exceed nine sail of the line, two of which were only sixty-fours, and three frigates,\* and these few were far from being in a complete state. A large proportion of them had been for some time at sea, and stood in need of repair, some for their hulls, some for their rigging, some for both; and they were, without exception, short of men. On his arrival off Toulon he sent in Captain Gore, of the *Medusa*, to reconnoitre the force in that harbour, and learnt from him that seven sail of the line, five frigates, and several corvettes were in the inner and outer roads, nearly, if not quite, ready for sea; and from other sources he gathered that there were also two more sail of the line further in, where Captain Gore was unable to see them. He took his station to the westward of Toulon, off Cape Sicie, selecting that unusual position as one which afforded him the greatest likelihood of stopping or overtaking the French fleet should it quit the harbour, and have some point outside the Mediterranean, such as Ireland, for its destination, while at the same time it avoided all appearance of blockading the port. This he never did, and never would allow any one to say that he did: on the contrary, the one dearest wish of his heart was that the enemy should come out and fight him. If they should come out, a battle, he was determined, they should not escape, for "he would follow them to the antipodes," and whether he

\* The following were the ships which composed Nelson's fleet at this time:—

100	Victory . . . .	{ Lord Nelson.
		{ Captain Hardy.
80	Gibraltar . . . .	{ Captain Ryves.
		{ Rear-Admiral Sir R. Bickerton.
	{ Kent . . . . .	{ Captain O'Brien.
	{ Donegal . . . .	{ Captain Sir R. Strachan.
74	{ Superb . . . .	{ Captain Keats.
	{ Belleisle . . . .	{ Captain Whitby.
	{ Renown . . . .	{ Captain White.
64	{ Monmouth . . .	{ Captain Hart.
	{ Agincourt . . .	{ Captain Schomberg.

The frigates were frequently changing; but their number was scarcely ever greater than three; sometimes even smaller.

were equal to them in numbers, or, as seemed more likely, inferior to them by at least a third, he had no doubt of giving a good account of them.

They knew better than to give him a chance of catching them. Once in the middle of September they ventured for an hour or two outside the harbour, but "they took wit in their anger, and returned again."\* A week or two afterwards some of their frigates were chased by one of our sixty-fours and two frigates, but they outsailed us and escaped, and till Midsummer of the next year nothing more was seen of them, but they kept snug and secure in their unassailable position. During the whole winter Nelson kept on the station that he had chosen whenever the weather would permit; when the storms incidental to the season, or want of supplies, especially of water, drove him off, he retired sometimes to a harbour formed by the Madalena Islands,† to which he gave the name of Agincourt Sound, because its excellencies as a station for large ships had been first discovered by Captain Ryves of the Agincourt; at other times he took his station with his line-of-battle ships off Cape San Sebastian, or sheltered them in the Gulf of Palma, on the southern side of Sardinia; leaving his frigates off Toulon to report to him the slightest movement on the part of the enemy; but nursing, as he was compelled to do, his largest ships for the battle to which he was looking with a feverish anxiety, as the close of his career.

Thus uneventfully passed the year in Europe. In the West Indies the renewal of the war fell heavily on the French Islands; (we were not as yet at war with Spain). Captain Hood with a small squadron reduced Sainte Lucie and Tobago, almost without a struggle; and Captain Loring with another completed the expulsion of the French from St. Domingo; capturing some frigates also and

\* 'Despatches,' v. 215, date September 27, 1803.

† These islands are at the Northern point of Sardinia.

smaller vessels, which were lying at Cape François. The Dutch colonies, too, of Demerara, Berbice, and Essequibo again fell into our hands, as, the next year, did the more important settlement of Surinam. In the East Indies our possessions were so extensive that we had no longer so much room to make fresh acquisitions, but a small fleet which we had in those waters under Vice-Admiral Rainier proved sufficient to baffle all the endeavours of the enemy to steal a march upon us, and to surprise some of our posts before our governors could hear of the renewal of the war. Even before Buonaparte's attack on Lord Whitworth he had despatched a strong squadron to the East under the command of Admiral Linois, giving him instructions to gain possession by surprise of some place (whether belonging to England, Portugal, or Holland was a matter of indifference), which should be strongly fortified, and should also supply a roadstead or harbour in which the French frigates and merchantmen might be secure from the attack of a superior force. One of his frigates reached Pondicherry by the middle of June, and Linois himself arrived early in July, but Admiral Rainier had already learnt how precarious was the chance of the preservation of peace. We had not yet restored Pondicherry to the French, and his fleet was stationed partly there, and partly in the adjacent roadstead of Cuddalore, when Linois came. Rainier had no instructions to attack the new comer, and interchanged courtesies with him on his first arrival, but he showed such an evident resolution not to lose sight of him that Linois perceived that there was no chance of striking the "unexpected and unlooked for" blow that his instructions recommended to him, and after a few days retired to the Isle of France to strengthen himself against the formal renewal of the war, which he knew, more certainly than the British Admiral, could not be far distant.

Actions between single ships were not at first very numerous, nor important, but, such as they were, we were inva-

riably successful in them ; though we had the mortification of losing one fine frigate, the *Minerve*, which we had originally captured from the French, and which they recovered this year through an unfortunate accident. At the beginning of July, in very thick weather, Captain J. Brenton, who commanded her, was standing close in to Cherbourg, in pursuit of some small vessels which he was endeavouring to cut off, when, deceived by the fog, he ran aground on a rocky shoal within half-gunshot of two heavy batteries, mounting together upwards of two hundred guns and mortars. They at once opened a damaging fire upon the frigate, which her position scarcely gave her any means of returning ; and though, by incessant labour, under the guidance of a most fertile ingenuity and admirable seamanship, Captain Brenton at last succeeded in getting her off the shoal, there was such an entire absence of wind when she floated, that he could not prevent the current from drifting her into the harbour, where she had no choice but to surrender. A few miles to the eastward, at the end of the year, we lost another fine frigate, the *Shannon*, Captain Leveson Gower, in nearly the same way. A fresh gale was blowing, and Captain Gower was deceived by the current and the flood tide, so that he ran aground a little to the southward of Cape Barfleur, under some heavy batteries. He and his men escaped on shore, and were made prisoners by the French ; but the frigate herself was almost hopelessly wrecked, and a day or two afterwards, Commander Edward Brenton, of the *Merlin* sloop, which had been in her company before the disaster, stood in and completed her destruction, so as to prevent the enemy from profiting by her misfortune further than by the capture of her crew.

The next year was almost equally devoid of striking events. Buonaparte conceived that he established his own power on more solid foundations when he procured his election as Emperor ; but he did not suffer himself to be diverted by the preparations and intrigues through which

he arrived at that object of his wishes, from his darling project of an invasion of England ; and in all his northern ports unusual numbers of workmen were occupied throughout the winter and the ensuing spring in the construction of a vast and heavily-armed flotilla, consisting of upwards of two thousand vessels ; and in deepening and widening the ports themselves : while we, on our part, made corresponding preparations to withstand and defeat the menaced attack. Large bodies of volunteers flocked to arms to assist the regular troops ; martello towers were built ; gunboats and floating batteries were constructed ; and Lord Keith who commanded the fleet in the Downs, was amply furnished with vessels of all sizes, fit for every kind of service. But no results followed from these vast preparations. Our warfare at this point was manifestly defensive, and depended on the movements of the enemy ; and, as they made no attempt to quit their harbours, our commanders had no opportunity of distinguishing themselves, but were confined to services which, however meritorious and useful to the country, shed no brilliancy of glory on the performers. Once or twice our sloops and other smaller vessels contrived to attack portions of the hostile flotillas, as they were moving along under the land from one port to another ; and disabled, drove ashore, or sunk many of their brigs, prames, and other boats ; the prame being a most formidable vessel, able to carry, besides its crew, a hundred soldiers and fifty horses, and being armed with twelve heavy guns. One of these actions, which, however, was unsought on our part, calls for particular mention from the subsequent mysterious fate of the British commander. Captain Wright, in the 18-gun sloop *Vincejo*, was coasting along near the mouth of the small river Morbihan, when a sudden calm forced him to anchor, in order to avoid being driven on the rocks by the current. In this position he was attacked by a flotilla of seventeen gunboats of different sizes ; making up together a force of



double his number of guns, and nearly ten times his number of men. They surrounded the *Vincejo* on all sides, and a fierce engagement at close quarters ensued; till at last Wright himself being severely wounded, many of his guns dismounted, and his ship greatly shattered in every part, he was compelled to surrender. The commander of the flotilla paid him many compliments on the gallantry of his resistance; but for some incomprehensible reason he was not treated like an ordinary prisoner of war. As Sir Sydney Smith had been some years before, he was removed to Paris and confined in the Temple, from which he was never released. Subsequently he was stated to be dead, and it was always, and still is, believed that he was murdered in his prison, though what particular offence he had given to any of the French authorities, has never been ascertained.

Another engagement which took place was even more remarkable, from the circumstance of its being carried on under the eyes of the new Emperor, whom for the future we must call by his Imperial name of Napoleon. He had not been satisfied with procuring his own election as Emperor, without at the same time enriching the Romish calendar with a new saint, whom he created under the title of Saint Napoleon, and to whom he assigned the 16th of August as his festival, having superseded St. Roch, to whom that day had previously been consecrated. In honour of his name-day he now came to Boulogne to hold on it a grand military and naval review, and to distribute among the troops of both services crosses of the Legion of Honour, which he had just instituted. One division of gunboats weighed anchor, and worked along the coast to the westward, exchanging, as it proceeded, several shots with one of our sloops, and also with the *Immortalité* frigate, under Captain Owen, who had the chief command of the small squadron whose especial station was off that port. As the flotilla received no injury worth speaking of.

from our fire, Napoleon determined to renew the action on a larger scale ; and, ten days afterwards, he embarked with his staff on board a barge, while ninety brigs and gunboats put to sea to execute a series of manœuvres in the face of our squadron. Captain Owen, with his own frigate and three small sloops, at once stood in and attacked them. They retreated, in order to gain the support of their batteries on shore ; and at the same time the greater part of their consorts, which had been left at anchor, weighed and came forth, and opened their fire also on our little squadron. One of our sloops was sunk by a shell which pierced her bottom, but several of the French boats were severely cut up and driven on shore. And Napoleon was apparently convinced that the flotilla, however numerous, would never be able to cross the Channel in safety, unless a fleet were at hand sufficient to give it effectual protection.

Before the winter came on we endeavoured to show him that it was not safe even in its own harbours : an engineer had contrived a new kind of fireship, to which he gave the name of catamaran, which was to float with its upper side on a level with the water, and, having been towed near enough to the enemy's vessels to drift down upon them with the tide, was to be exploded by a piece of clockwork in the inside, at the expiration of a period which could be calculated with extreme nicety. This invention, however, had not been kept entirely secret. The French had learnt what was in contemplation with sufficient accuracy to be able to guard against it to a great extent ; and though the first experiment, that was made with four of these engines, so far succeeded that the catamarans got among the gunboats, and exploded as it had been designed that they should, they produced no effect beyond that of killing and wounding about twenty men, and destroying one launch. And before any second attempt could be made the French constructed a barrier in front of their

whole line, which no engine of the kind could pass ; and, in consequence of this obstacle, and still more, probably, because of the failure of the first attempt, it was never repeated, and was generally regarded with disfavour in England, if not with contempt.

During the whole year, Admiral Cornwallis lay off Brest with a fleet varying from thirteen to seventeen sail of the line : but Admiral Ganteaume, who commanded the French fleet, though it exceeded ours by five or six ships, never moved. Ganteaume's fleet was, in fact, a portion of the force which Napoleon destined for the invasion of this island ; and he intended it to perform a double duty : first to transport a large army to the north of Ireland, or perhaps to Scotland ; and then to return to the Channel, and, being combined with another fleet, which was being prepared at Rochefort under Admiral Villeneuve, to escort the flotilla and 80,000 men, under the command of the Emperor himself, to the Kentish coast. Napoleon did not, however, intend to attempt this enterprise before November ; and circumstances subsequently led him to postpone it till the year following, when he bent his whole intellect on the arrangement of a vast comprehensive plan for the subjugation of this island ; failing to estimate nothing but the genius of Nelson, and the patriotic hardihood of our whole body of sailors, which baffled and defeated all his calculations, and compelled him to try another course, and, though of all his enemies Britain was the one which he most hated, and which alone he feared, to direct his efforts against her allies and to leave her unmolested ; confessing her to be the Mistress of the Seas, and, as such, invincible, unassailable.

Another French squadron, whose junction with either of the others would have given it a dangerous superiority, lay at Ferrol ; where it was blockaded with great vigilance by Sir Edward Pellew, who, with the rank of commodore, had a powerful squadron under his orders. By diligent

personal examination he discovered a good anchorage in the Bay of Betanços, between Ferrol and Corunna, where he sheltered his fleet in heavy weather, resuming his post across the entrance of the harbour the moment that he could do so without injury to his ships. At one time he so fully expected the Brest fleet to come down upon him and liberate their consorts in the Ferrol, that, to guard against a surprise in the dark, he kept the men at quarters all night, and did not allow them to retire to their hammocks till daylight. But the Brest fleet, as we have seen, remained at home, nor was there any intention that it should move in that direction. Without their aid the Ferrol squadron dared not quit its post; and the year passed without Pellew having any opportunity of bringing a single enemy's ship to action.

But it was on Toulon, or rather on Nelson who was watching that harbour, that the eyes of England were fixed. The fleet there lay almost as close as that in Brest; it might have been said quite as close, had not its Admiral, M. Latouche Treville, occasionally shown his flag for a mile or two outside his harbour, and on one occasion sent to Paris such an account of his exploit as irritated Nelson into making it of more importance than it deserved. During the whole winter Nelson had watched Toulon with a perseverance which has probably never been equalled. His force was never equal in number to that which lay in the harbour; but the French sailors knew, as well as his own, than a far greater disparity than existed would be counterbalanced by his genius, and by the heroic spirit which he had breathed into all around him. He was as proud of his followers as they were proud of him, and in more than one of his despatches spoke of them, men as well as officers, as the most admirable band of warriors that any Admiral had ever had the good fortune to command. The ships themselves were not quite so perfect. Of them and their equipment he

had complained when he first joined them; and the weather, which had been unusually stormy during the winter, had not improved them. Yet, though, as he said, the French fleet was as fine as paint could make it, he did not fear but that his own weather-beaten ships would be able to give a good account of it, should it only venture out. Whenever the weather permitted he kept in the offing, out of sight of land, in order the more to tempt the French to sea, now and then sending in a frigate or two to the mouth of the harbour to reconnoitre. Sometimes he almost hoped that the battle for which he was longing was at hand. In April, when he had been blown to the eastward, the French came out once or twice; and, after he had got back to his station off Cape Sicie, one day that the Amazon captured a brig in their sight, several of their ships weighed anchor and chased her. A few weeks later, on the 24th of May, Rear-Admiral Campbell, in the Donegal, 74, with the two frigates, Canopus and Amazon, stood close in to see if there were any sign of movement in the harbour, when the French Admiral, perceiving them, came out with five sail of the line, three frigates, and some gunboats, to try and cut them off. Some of his vessels got near enough to open a distant fire on the Donegal and one of the frigates: but, though he replied to it with a few guns, Admiral Campbell knew his duty too well to risk one ship against five, and retreated to join the main body. M. Latouche Treville pursued him for nearly an hour, and a second hour would have brought him up to our main body; but, seeing this, he again retreated. Still Nelson cherished a hope that, if he continued "playing out and in" in this manner, he would some day or other find his retreat cut off, and be forced to fight. The Frenchman showed some of his ships again when, on the 4th of June, the British fleet fired a royal salute for the king's birthday; but, as he kept back his own flagship, Nelson saw that he was not in earnest on that occasion.

Ten days afterwards he came out with his whole force, eight sail of the line and six frigates, and the same day Nelson himself was standing in unusually near the harbour's mouth, with five sail of the line and two frigates. Nelson at once brought-to and formed in line of battle, maintopsail to the mast, to receive the attack, which he doubted not that the sight of the smallness of his numbers would at last lead the Frenchman to make. To advance himself was useless: partly because such a movement would expose his ships to the batteries on shore; and partly because, in an action in the very mouth of the harbour, the enemy, however defeated, would always have a secure and easy retreat. Of such a retreat M. Latouche had no idea of depriving himself: and, after looking at Nelson's five ships for a couple of hours, he deliberately tacked and returned into Toulon. The Victory and her consorts stood on after him till they got near enough to see him take in his sails, as a proof that he was not coming out again that evening; and Nelson thought no more of the occurrence, which had nothing in it very different from the ordinary course of events, till, a month or more afterwards, he learnt that the French Admiral had sent a despatch to the Minister of Marine, in which he affirmed that he had chased the whole British fleet, and that Nelson himself had fled before him. And his account had been so far believed that he had been magnificently rewarded for his achievement. Nelson was provoked beyond measure: not for his own sake, since, as he said, "if his character was not by that time established for not being apt to run away, it was not worth his while to put the world right," but for the honour of the fleet which he commanded, and of the service in general. He sent home to the Admiralty a copy of the Victory's log: and for some time kept the Gazette in which M. Latouche's despatch was published, vowing that, if he took him prisoner, he should eat it in a sandwich.

However, soon afterwards the Frenchman died and was succeeded by Admiral Dumanoir, who, at the beginning of November, was superseded by Admiral Ville-neuve ; but the change of commanders produced no alteration in tactics, and the year passed by, as far as the movements of the great fleets were concerned, as uneventfully as that which had preceded it.

Nelson's duties, however, were not confined to watching the French fleet. He was charged also, as has been already mentioned, with the task of dealing with the Dey of Algiers ; who, partly from natural ferocity and arrogance, and partly, in all probability, from a subservience to French influence, had, on more than one occasion, insulted both our civil servants and our seamen. He had expelled our consul. He had detained an English vessel, called the *Ape*, freighted with a cargo belonging wholly to English merchants, on the frivolous pretext that her crew did not contain that proportion of British sailors which he professed to consider necessary to establish her character as an English ship. And it was known that he had in his prisons a number of British subjects. To bring such a barbarian to reason by peaceful means was no easy task. Yet no others could be employed, for Algiers was reported to be so strongly fortified that, in Nelson's judgment, it would have required a force far stronger than his entire fleet to have attacked it with any chance of success. Fortunately among his captains he had one whose great abilities were not limited to the strict line of his profession : Captain Keats, the gallant captain of the *Superb*, who had already earned no fading laurels in the second action off Algesiras. To him he entrusted the delicate task of negotiating with the Dey ; and so successfully did Keats execute his commission that he carried every point on which the ministers at home had desired Nelson to insist. The Dey consented to receive a new consul, to restore the *Ape*, to liberate whatever British subjects he had as prisoners,

and to place us, for the future, on the same footing as the most favoured nation, though it was tolerably plain that he would only adhere to such stipulations as long as our fleet in the Mediterranean should be able to compel the observance of them; and also that his idea of the treatment to which we were entitled as a favoured nation did not go beyond a forbearance to plunder our vessels as long as others equally tempting were within his reach.

Some of the arrangements, too, within the fleet itself caused Nelson no small trouble. The bombvessels attached to the fleet had among their crew a certain portion of artillerymen to serve the mortars, and the artillery officers claimed for themselves and their men the right of being perfectly independent of the captains of the ships on board of which they were serving. Their pretensions were reported to Nelson. He at once issued the most peremptory orders to the captains of the bombvessels to ignore the claims so set up, and wrote most earnestly to Lord St. Vincent, the First Lord, and to Troubridge, who also had a seat at the Board of Admiralty, pointing out to them the necessity of supporting his order, and the authority of the naval captains, insisting that the Act of Parliament which related to the subject fully bore out his view, and that, if that view should be overruled, there would be an end of the discipline, that is to say, of the very existence of the navy; since "there could not be two commanders in one ship," as would be the case if the artillery officers were to be independent of the naval captain. To prevent any recurrence of these disputes he recommended that "the navy should have its own corps of artillery." The justice of his views and the force of his arguments were fully recognised, his recommendation was adopted, and in compliance with it, a corps of marine artillery was established.

But, while hostilities between us and the French were proceeding thus languidly, an occurrence of great impor-



tance took place which rudely tore away the flimsy veil beneath which the Spaniards sought to conceal their subservience to France, and their consequent enmity to us. Though at the time of our declaration of war against France no similar motions had been adopted towards Spain, our relations with that country were notoriously of a most doubtful character. Seven years before, Spain had agreed to furnish France with an armed contingent, and at the end of the last year, 1803, the force so to be supplied had been commuted for an enormous annual payment of nearly three millions of money. Our minister at Madrid, Mr. Frere, had addressed to the Spanish court more than one remonstrance on the subject; declaring, with truth, that a payment of so great an amount was manifestly, and in its very nature, a war subsidy. At the beginning of the year of which we are speaking, 1804, it became further known to our Government that detachments of French troops had been received at Ferrol, and that the Spaniards were equipping a powerful squadron at that port, which could hardly have any other object than an attack upon us. Mr. Frere now addressed to the Court of Madrid fresh remonstrances in a more peremptory tone, requiring Spain to desist at once from all naval preparations, which could only be looked upon as a defiance to Great Britain, and declaring that our Government would view the continuance of such preparations as an indication of a resolution to attack us so unquestionable that we should treat it as a declaration of war. Our ministry subsequently received information that the warlike preparations of Spain were not limited to the equipment of this squadron: that, in fact, Spain was putting her army, as well as her navy, on a war-footing: that she was receiving large bodies of French soldiers at her different military stations, and that she was only waiting to issue a formal declaration of war against us till after the arrival of four ships, that were on their way from South America, laden with an

unusual amount of treasure. The existing circumstances of the three countries singularly resembled the state of affairs in 1760,\* when the first Pitt urged his colleagues to hinder the Spanish galleons from furnishing their own country and France with the means of carrying on war against us. Influenced by a similar spirit, his son, who had lately reassumed the reins of government in this country, now saw the necessity, while Spain was so manifestly the slave of France, of preventing her from obtaining such a supply, which would not stay with her, but would speedily find its way into the French exchequer. The Spanish vessels were understood to be bound to Cadiz, and thither Admiral Cornwallis, who was still watching the French fleet off Brest, was enjoined to send two frigates to intercept and detain them till our Government should have time to come to a friendly understanding with Spain on those parts of her conduct which afforded us grounds for suspicion and complaint. Orders of a similar tenor, but leaving the amount of the force to be employed more to his discretion, were sent at the same time to Nelson, within whose command that part of the Spanish coast was ; and, had they reached him in time, all the mischief that ensued would have been prevented : for the resolution taken by our cabinet to prevent so vast an amount of wealth, as the Spanish vessels were understood to contain, from being used against us, was consistent with prudent moderation, as well as with sagacious energy ; but it was manifestly indispensable that the force employed by us for that purpose should be large enough to compel the Spaniards to an unresisting submission. It is curious that no one but Nelson saw this. He, the very instant that he received his orders from the Admiralty, sent Sir Robert Strachan to Cadiz with his own ship, the *Donegal*, 74, and four frigates, and with further orders to add to that force any other

\* See vol. i. p. 286.

ships that he might happen to meet, among which he doubted not that another ship of the line, the *Triumph*, which was cruizing off the mouth of the Straits at the time, would be one. But he was too late : his orders did not reach him till the 13th of October : his instructions to Sir R. Strachan are dated the same day, but the collision had taken place eight days before. The frigates sent by Admiral Cornwallis had been the *Indefatigable*, 44, Captain Moore, and the *Lively*, 38, Captain Hammond. As they reached Cape St. Vincent they were joined by the *Medusa*, 40, Captain Gore, and the *Amphion*, 40, Captain Sutton ; and at daybreak on the 5th of October, the second day after their junction, as the four frigates were cruising together off Cape Santa Maria, a headland about sixty miles east of Cape St. Vincent, the Spanish treasure ships came in sight. We at once chased them and overtook them, and Captain Moore, as the senior officer, announced to the Spanish Commander-in-chief the orders which he had received, and entreated him to comply with them without resistance. The Spaniard naturally felt it inconsistent with his honour to make such submission to an equal force, and there was no alternative but a battle. The principal Spanish frigate the *Medea*, carried forty-two guns ; her consorts, the *Fama*, the *Mercedes*, and the *Clara*, mounted thirty-six guns each. The advantage, therefore, was rather on our side, and it speedily showed itself in a most calamitous manner. The action had not lasted ten minutes when the *Mercedes* blew up. Dismayed by her destruction, her consorts made but a feeble resistance. In a few minutes more the *Medea* and *Clara* surrendered ; and the *Fama*, which had struck before either of them, but which endeavoured to take advantage of the confusion caused by the disaster of the *Mercedes* to effect her escape, was soon overtaken and secured. The killed and wounded in all our ships did not amount to ten men ; nor, with the

exception of the crew of the Mercedes, of whom nearly all perished, was the Spanish loss of life heavy. But the value of the prizes was immense ; and the indignation felt in Spain at such a blow, which, being inflicted in time of peace, they looked upon as a treacherous insult as well as an injury, was immense also. We offered explanations, and some diplomatic notes passed between the two Governments, but, in the end, Spain formally declared war against us and set all her dockyards and arsenals to work with unusual vigour to give all the effect in her power to the declaration.

It does not generally fall within the plan of the present work to record the exploits, however gallant or seaman-like, of any ships except those which formed a part of the Royal Navy ; but one achievement of a squadron of merchantmen has been so widely celebrated that it seems entitled to form an exception to this rule, especially since the force which they defeated did belong to the national navy of France. At the beginning of this year a squadron of sixteen ships, belonging to the East India Company, were on their way home, without the usual escort of king's ships, but with a single armed brig, the Ganges, also belonging to the Company, and with a small number of other merchant vessels. Each of the Indiamen was equipped with about thirty guns, nor were the generality of the other merchantmen wholly unarmed : but the crews of all the vessels were scanty, barely sufficient to work each ship, and apparently by no means adequate to manage her, and to serve the guns likewise. They had sailed from Canton on the last day of January, and on the 14th of February were in the neighbourhood of the Straits of Malacca, when they saw a squadron ahead, which was soon ascertained to belong to the enemy, and to consist of one line-of-battle ship, three frigates, and a brig. It was the same which, in the preceding year, had retired before Admiral Rainier at Pondicherry. Having taken on board

supplies at the Isle of France, Admiral Linois had subsequently returned to Batavia, and was now cruising about in search of this very fleet of Indiamen, of whose intended voyage he had received accurate intelligence, and who now were sailing, as it were into his very mouth. It might have been supposed that no number of merchantmen could be a match for such a vessel as the *Marengo*, the French flagship, or for the heavy frigates, the *Belle-Poule* and the *Semillante*, with their veteran and well-trained crews; but, fortunately, Mr. Dance, the senior captain of the Indiamen, was a man of courage, presence of mind, and skill, and he resolved not to lose any of his fleet without a struggle. It was late in the day when the French came up with them; and, as they lay-to for the night, preferring to have the whole day before them to gather together their expected prizes, they gave him ample time to make his arrangements to receive their attack. He formed a close line of battle, placed his weaker ships as far out of harm's way as he could, and, the next morning, as the French came on, he also bore down to meet them. They opened a heavy fire, and he returned it with a rapidity which, if not equal to that of our own Royal Navy, was at least not inferior to theirs. His object being to disable rather than to capture the ships of the enemy, he directed his guns chiefly at their rigging, doing considerable damage to their sails and spars; and with his leading ships he maintained so equal a combat, that, as those in the rear came up, M. Linois began to fear that he should be overpowered by their numbers, and, pronouncing it an unequal conflict, he discontinued the action, and made off with every sail that he could set. Dance actually pursued him for some hours, till he found that a perseverance in the chase would lead him too far out of his course: then, as evening came on, he once more collected his fleet together and pursued his voyage. It was fortunate for him that Admiral Linois was not a very

enterprising officer ; but that circumstance must not be allowed to detract from the credit due to him for his resolution and skill. It required no moderate exertion of both to face such antagonists, and to do so with success. And the merit of his exploit was universally allowed at home, and magnificently rewarded. He was knighted by the king : he, and his officers, and every seaman in his fleet received a handsome pecuniary reward from the East India Company : the Patriotic Fund presented swords to him and each of his captains ; and his and their conduct may fairly be cited as furnishing the brightest page in the history of our merchant-service, and as one of the most conspicuous instances of the innate courage of Britons, even when they have not had the advantage of professional training, and of being inured by practice and habit to the dangers of war.

This was not the only repulse which M. Linois suffered in the course of this year, and the second was even less creditable to him. He was still cruising about the Indian seas, with his own ship and two frigates, when, about the middle of September, he saw three British ships at anchor in the roads of Vizagapatam, and bore down to attack them. He believed that the largest of them was the *Wilhelmina*, a frigate armed *en flûte*, and not carrying above twenty-one guns : she proved to be the 50-gun ship *Centurion*, with two merchantmen in her charge ; but it was not to be expected that that would make any difference, since, even without taking the French frigates into the account, a 50-gun ship could not hope to make a long resistance to a seventy-four. The fate of the *Leander* when attacked by the *Généreux* was a sufficient proof of this ; and besides the inferiority of her force, the British ship laboured at first under the disadvantage of being without her captain, who, during the first part of the action which ensued, was absent on service on shore. Till he rejoined her she was under the command of Lieu-

tenant Phillips ; but that officer showed that undaunted resolution was more valuable even than experience in a contest such as lay before him. As he saw the enemy bearing down upon him he signalled to the merchantmen under his protection to make their escape. One obeyed : the other paid no attention to the order, and was soon captured by one of the frigates. The *Centurion* prepared for action. The largest of the frigates was the first to come within reach of her guns : her consorts were not long after her, and, as they approached, they all opened their fire on the *Centurion*, to which she replied with great vigour. She was aided in some degree by a battery of three guns on shore, but still the combat was most unequal, and she sustained great damage in her rigging and sails. The French ships apparently suffered more ; for, at the end of little more than half-an-hour they drew off to repair their damages. Presently they returned to the attack, keeping at a greater distance than before, and deriving great advantage from this change of tactics, since their guns, being heavier, were effective at a far greater distance than those of the *Centurion*. Still she returned their fire as fiercely as ever, and apparently still with superior effect, since, at the end of two hours more, they all hoisted their sails, and retreated from our single ship.

Any other exploit of a single vessel can hardly appear to advantage after the relation of so brilliant a defeat of so superior a force. But the French were not the only foes who, in actions of this kind, were forced to acknowledge the superior prowess of our seamen. The Dutch navy had not recovered from the blows dealt to it by Duncan ; but we still judged it necessary to keep a small force off the Texel ; and on one occasion, Captain Hardinge, in the 18-gun brig *Scorpion*, having been sent to reconnoitre the Channel, discovered two brigs at anchor in the roads, and determined to cut out the nearest of them. As the crew were preparing for the enterprise, they were joined by the 14-gun brig *Beaver*, Captain Pelly, who gladly took part

in it, and at night the two captains led their boats to the attack. The sailors in the boats amounted to about sixty men. The Dutch crew numbered seventy-six, and their position gave them still greater advantage than their superiority of number, for the attack had been foreseen, and the ship had boarding-nettings up, and was in every respect well prepared to make a stout defence, but nothing could resist the impetuosity of the assailants. Captain Hardinge was the first man on board, and he found an antagonist as brave as himself, with more skill as a swordsman, in the Dutch captain; he was disarmed, and nearly slain, when one of his own men came to his rescue. The Dutch captain was less fortunate; surrounded and assailed on all sides, he disdained to accept quarter. Hardinge, admiring his skill and courage, would gladly have saved him, and entreated him to submit; but he fought on unyieldingly, and compelled his foes to kill him. His fall decided the fate of the ship, which proved to be the *Atalante* of 16 guns. But she was hardly secured when the victory of our men threatened to turn to their destruction. Suddenly a gale came on, which for a while baffled all their endeavours to retire from the narrow channel in which the vessel lay. Some of their boats broke adrift; some were swamped. For eight-and-forty hours they remained in the most imminent peril of shipwreck, till fortunately the wind shifted again, and, after great labour and danger, they regained the open sea with their prize.

Captain Hardinge was not contented with expressing his regret for the Dutch commander who had so nearly killed him; in the spirit of ancient chivalry he resolved to pay his remains all the honour in his power, and gave him as solemn a funeral as can be bestowed at sea. For the hour he set his prisoners at liberty, hauled down the British colours from the *Atalante*, and restored their national ensign; one of the Dutch officers pronounced a funeral oration over their captain, and a salute of three volleys was fired as his body descended into the deep. Four years



afterwards Captain Hardinge became unfortunately entitled to similar honours himself, having fallen in a very gallant action, in which, under his command, the *San Fiorenzo*, 42, captured the French frigate *Piémontaise*, 50. The battle took place on the coast of Ceylon, and the Governor of that island, General Maitland, on the day that Hardinge was buried, caused the flag at Colombo to be hoisted half-mast high and minute-guns to be fired ; and, at home, the King granted his relations an augmentation of their armorial bearings, as the reward which they themselves selected, to commemorate the chivalrous bravery of one of whom they were deservedly proud.

An action, in which a powerful French privateer, *L'Egyptienne* of 36 guns, was attacked by the 18-gun brig *Osprey*, while most creditable to the English commander, Captain Younghusband, was very singular in the effect which it produced on the enemy's vessel. *L'Egyptienne* had formerly belonged to the regular navy of France, but had been sold to some merchants at Bordeaux ; and towards the end of March she was convoying some trading-vessels among the Windward Islands, when she was discovered, chased, and brought to action by the *Osprey*. The brig was not half her size, and her crew did not amount to half the number of the French sailors ; nevertheless, after a combat of nearly an hour and a half, the privateer was forced to trust to her superior speed for safety. Taking to flight, she easily distanced the *Osprey*, which pursued her for some time to no purpose ; but, in spite of the success of her attempt to escape, her crew were so completely disheartened by the result of this encounter, that, when two days after she fell in with a still weaker antagonist, the 14-gun sloop *Hippomenes*, under command of Captain Shipley, she was taken almost without resistance, maintaining indeed a running fight for some time, but striking her colours the moment the British sloop got fairly alongside.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

1804—1805.

The small effect which Spain had on the war — Napoleon revives the project of invading England — Our measures of defence — The French fleets at Brest, Rochefort and Toulon — Admiral Cornwallis watches Brest — M. Ganteaume tries in vain to come out of Brest — The Rochefort squadron escapes and goes to the West Indies — Admiral Cochrane pursues it — Sir Robert Calder watches Ferrol — Nelson watches Toulon — M. Villeneuve comes out of Toulon, but is driven back by a storm — Nelson, unable to gain accurate information, goes to Egypt in search of him, and returns — M. Villeneuve sails again, and reaches the West Indies — Nelson pursues him — Is baffled by foul winds — Doubts whether he is gone to Ireland — Admiral Campbell's information — Nelson goes to the West Indies — Is misled by General Brereton's false information — Misses the French — Nelson pursues them back to Europe — Reaches Gibraltar — Joins Admiral Cornwallis — Returns to England — The French fleet is met and defeated by Sir R. Calder — He is brought to court-martial and reprimanded — Reflections on the trial.

WE had now Spain for our enemy as well as France ; but her submission to her more powerful ally produced no alteration in the character of the war. Her naval operations this year were confined to the share which she bore in Sir Robert Calder's action and in the great battle of Trafalgar. After that decisive blow, her ships remained in their harbours as long as she continued at war with us ; and, in less than three years from that day, Napoleon's grasping ambition alienated the whole nation from him, and drove her to seek aid and protection from us. On issuing her declaration of war, she began to exert herself with great diligence to give effect to it, in the only manner in which she could act against us, by the equipment of a fleet to co-operate with those which France was

preparing in all her harbours, and on which Napoleon, flushed with the attainment of the new rank which he had so long coveted, relied for at last securing him success in the design, which he had never laid aside, of invading England, and dictating his own terms in London. During the entire period of peace, anticipating the certain and speedy renewal of the war, he had never for a moment allowed that prospect to pass from his mind; and the flotilla which, at the beginning of this year was lying in his ports, waiting only for his signal to unite in one vast body, again amounted to nearly two thousand three hundred vessels; while the troops, which they were to transport across the Channel the first moment that his fleet should be able to escort them in safety, were but little fewer than a hundred a fifty thousand men.

We were well prepared to defeat the design. Four years before, Nelson had shown the French the danger of moving away from the protection of their land-batteries; and now our squadrons of small frigates, brigs, and sloops, not only retaught them this lesson, but more than once assailed them with great effect, while still keeping close to their own shore. We were not invariably successful. On one occasion we even lost two brigs: the *Plumper* and the *Teaser*, while venturing too near the port of Granville, got becalmed, and having their retreat thus cut off, were surrounded by the enemy's gunboats and captured; but, generally, we inflicted far greater damage than we sustained. One squadron was under the command of Sir Sidney Smith, another was led by Captain E. Owen of the *Immortalité*, a third by Captain King in the *Ariadne*, and, on one occasion in particular, when the contingent, which the Dutch had undertaken to furnish, was on its way from Dunkirk to Ambleteuse, a small harbour near Boulogne, our ships stood close enough in to cannonade them along the greater part of their passage: and, in spite of the protection afforded them by some batteries of

unusual strength, which had lately been constructed on the coast, by their heavy fire sunk some and drove more on shore. In August, Napoleon himself again came down to Boulogne to inspect his flotilla, and to see the troops, whom he had at hand, practise their embarkation under his own eye. What took place on that occasion, was a striking proof of what may be done by the energy of a single man. So vast an army as he had collected was, of necessity, widely spread, yet, though some of his regiments were encamped at a distance of above two miles from the shore, an entire division, horses and all, was embarked in the boats within an hour and a half of the moment when the drums first gave the signal to move. The Emperor's confidence was raised to the highest pitch of exultation at the sight of this triumph of organization and discipline ; and he declared, that, " he needed to be master of the sea for only six hours, to terminate the very existence of England." Six hours did not seem a long time to him ; but there were those afloat to whom six seconds of the mastery of the seas, enjoyed by any country but Britain, would have seemed an age. One in particular was there who felt himself, as we may hardly doubt that he was, raised up by Providence to baffle such an ambition ; and who, with the sublimest courage and the loftiest genius, was prodigal not only of almost superhuman exertions, but of his life's blood to establish the maritime supremacy of his country on a permanent footing, as the foundation on which not only her greatness and her glory, but her independence and her safety could alone rest.

Napoleon had fleets at Brest, at Rochefort, and at Toulon : all carefully watched by us as he well knew ; for he was admirably served by his spies, and was in possession of the most accurate information, not only of the numbers which each of our Admirals had under his command, but of the state and amount of his supplies,

and of the condition of every ship in his squadron.\* He knew too the eagerness with which those Admirals longed to bring his fleets to action. But separate battles between single fleets made no part of the plan which he had formed. His object was by the appearance of small squadrons at different points to alarm us for the West Indies, for the East Indies, for Egypt, for Ireland; in order that our commanders, being thus perplexed and distracted by the variety and uncertainty of the intelligence which reached them, might be led either to weaken their fleets by detachments, or to draw them off altogether for a moment, in a wild-goose chase after enemies, whose position it would be impossible for them to ascertain; while in the mean time his own fleets might profit by their weakness or their absence from their posts to quit their harbours without a battle, and to unite in one vast armada of overpowering strength, which should gain him the momentary command of the Channel, and enable him to land the host, which he had in readiness in safety on our shores. Our plan, as far as those fleets were concerned, was more simple. We had a corresponding force off each French port. Brest was still watched by Admiral Cornwallis, who, for a short time in the spring, was relieved by Sir Charles Cotton and Lord Gardner: and so effectively did these Admirals perform their task, that on one occasion only (in the middle of April) did the French Commander, M. Ganteaume, venture to leave his shelter; and then he found himself so instantly pursued by our fleet, at that moment under the command of Lord Gardner, that, in pursuance of the strict orders which he had received on all accounts to avoid a battle, he put back again into his harbour, and, except on one or two occasions when he moved

\* See especially his letters to Decrès, through April and May of this year. — *Correspondance de Napoleon*, vol. x., especially pp. 353, 359, 375, 385, 444, 447, 451, 504, &c., &c.

to the neighbouring anchorage in Camaret Bay, or Bertaume Roads, he remained there in entire inaction till the middle of December. The Rochefort squadron was more fortunate. Admiral Missiessy, who commanded it, took prompt advantage of the British squadron being for a few days driven off its post by the gales at the beginning of the year, set sail, and safely reached the West Indies, where he made successful descents on Dominica and one or two others of our islands, carrying off considerable booty, but failing in his attempt to make himself permanently master of any of our settlements. Then, as Napoleon's purpose had been sufficiently served by his being known to be in that region, he returned to Europe, hoping to be in time to take his share in the more important operations of the invasion: and before the end of May resumed his old station in the roads of Aix. Further down the shores of the Atlantic, a combined French and Spanish fleet lay in Ferrol; which was watched at first by Admiral Cochrane; and, when that officer went to the West Indies in pursuit of Missiessy, his squadron was replaced by one of greater strength under Sir Robert Calder; and, though Cadiz properly belonged to the Mediterranean station, the Admiralty on this occasion sent Sir John Orde thither with a separate command. It would have been better in every respect to have followed the more natural course of reinforcing Nelson with the ships entrusted to Sir John; and thus enabling him to detach a squadron from his fleet to watch the Spaniards: for, not only did former passages in Sir John Orde's career prove him, though not wanting in courage, to be wholly deficient in the higher qualities required of a Commander-in-chief; but it was more notorious still that he was jealous of and unfriendly to Nelson. However, the magnanimity of that great man prevented the bad consequences which might have been anticipated from this ill-judged appoint-

ment, and in the spring Sir John returned home, and the duty of watching Cadiz devolved mainly on Vice-Admiral Collingwood, though he had rarely above four ships with which to perform it.

It was, however, still on Nelson and his fleet that the attention of both nations was mainly directed. The physicians of the fleet had urgently recommended his return home for a few months as a measure indispensable to the recovery of his strength, if not to the preservation of his life : for his exertions and his wounds had permanently injured his constitution, his sufferings were frequently extreme, and he had received leave of absence for the winter ; but more than once, when he thought of availing himself of the permission, indications appeared of the French fleet coming out, and he could not bring himself to quit his post. Looking with the eye of a statesman at the political effect of his operations, his desire was to strike a blow at them within sight of their own coast, that all Europe might, as it were, see the power of England : nor was it, perhaps, without some thought also of his own fame that he desired to eclipse his victory of the Nile in the same sea. In spite, therefore, of infirmities and sufferings such as would wholly have disabled any other man, he still watched on ; dropping down in rough weather to his favourite anchorage among the Maddalena Islands, but always keeping a frigate or two off Toulon to give him the earliest intelligence of any of M. Villeneuve's movements. The force under his command now amounted to eleven sail of the line. Sir R. Bickerton, with his flag flying in the Royal Sovereign, was his second in command ; and among his captains were his old comrade Hallowell in the *Tigre*, 74, Conn, who had won his cordial praises in the attack on the Boulogne flotilla, in the *Canopus*, 80 ; Keats, who had not indeed before served under him, but whose rare skill and judgment in every part of his profession

he estimated as it deserved, in the *Superb*, 74 : the *Conqueror*, 74, was commanded by Israel Pellew, whose name is overshadowed in some degree by the renown of his more illustrious brother, but who was well known in the service for an officer of undaunted courage ; the *Spencer*, 74, by Stopford, who within the memory of the present generation has led a British fleet to gather another harvest of glory under the walls of Acre. His great want was a sufficiency of frigates. He had with him at this time but two, the *Active*, Captain Mowbray, and the *Seahorse*, Captain Boyle ; and now, as before the Nile, he was continually distressed for want of information which such "eyes of the fleet," as he was wont to call them, could alone procure for him. What could be done these two did ; and on the 19th of January, while he was sheltering his fleet in Agincourt Sound, they brought him word that M. Villeneuve was at sea. On the 17th that officer had issued from Toulon with a fleet of exactly the same number of line-of-battle ships as the British, but with seven frigates and two or three smaller vessels. At first he steered eastward towards the Hières Islands ; then, on the 18th, as the wind freshened from the north-west, he bore down to the southward at a rapid rate. The British frigates had kept in sight of him sufficiently long to ascertain the direction that he was taking, which appeared to be towards the southern extremity of Sardinia. The very moment that the *Active's* signal that the enemy were at sea was seen by the *Victory*, Nelson weighed anchor, led the fleet under every sail that the cross-wind would allow him to set, through the narrow passage between the little island of Biche and Sardinia ; and then with the signal flying to prepare for battle, and the fleet in two columns and close order, he passed down along the western side of Sardinia in confident hope of a speedy meeting with the enemy. He was aware that they had on board



about six thousand troops under General Lauriston, and from this circumstance concluded that their object was a descent upon some not very distant shore. The fact of their having left Toulon with a north-west wind, appeared to him a convincing proof that their destination was to the eastward: they might be planning an attack on Cagliari, or on Sicily, or on the Morea; or, still more probably, on Egypt. Wherever they were bound, they had no great start of him; and what start they had he hoped to counterbalance by his superior celerity of movement. When he reached the Gulf of Palma, he found that they had not been seen there; and he therefore hastened towards Palermo, to cover Sicily. There again nothing had been heard of them; but the wind, as he went, had increased to a gale, and he presently learnt that one of their ships had put into Ajaccio in a very crippled state, and he began to suspect that the storm had frightened their whole fleet back to Toulon: if that were the case they were not likely to be mischievous for some little time, but it was equally possible that his failure to obtain intelligence of them might arise from their having kept the open sea, and gone straight to Egypt. Thither therefore he now bent his way; detaching one or two small vessels that had joined him to the shores of Greece, Africa, and other places for news, and, to save time, beating with the main body of the fleet through the Straits of Messina, a feat "unprecedented," as he truly said, "in nautical history." He justified the exploit to the Admiralty on the ground that "although the danger from the rapidity of the current was great, yet the object was equally great; and he could rely with confidence on the zeal and activity of the fleet under his command." On the 7th of February he reached Alexandria. They had not been there: but the utterly defenceless state of that city, and of the other defences of Egypt, of which beyond a question the French had accu-

rate knowledge, confirmed him in his belief that Egypt had been Villeneuve's destination. As they were not there, he concluded that his other surmise was well-founded, and that they had been driven back to port; and therefore, without a moment's loss of time, he retraced his steps. On the 19th he reached Malta, and found that his last conclusion was correct, and that Villeneuve had been driven back to Toulon with his fleet in a greatly shattered condition. He himself had been exposed to the same storm, yet he was able to report to the Admiralty that "his ships had received no damage; not a yard or mast had been sprung or crippled, or scarcely a sail split." For the first time in his life he wished the enemy had been as well able to contend with the gale, as, in that case, nothing could have hindered his meeting them off Sardinia. Now his only course was to return to Cape Sicie, and there to renew his watch for their resumption of their expedition.

Nelson's reasons for looking for the enemy in Egypt had been to all appearance incontrovertible; yet they had led him to a mistaken conclusion as to Villeneuve's movements. It seemed to Nelson impossible that a fleet designing to go to the westward should leave port with a wind dead foul, yet this had been the conduct of the French Admiral. According to orders drawn up by Napoleon himself, the Toulon fleet was intended to co-operate with that which, almost a week earlier, as has been already mentioned, had sailed from Rochefort; the Emperor's intention being that while Missiessy was engaged at Dominica and Saint Lucie, Villeneuve should employ his fleet and the land-force by which it was accompanied in recovering Cayenne, Surinam, Demerara, and the other Dutch settlements of which we had made ourselves masters; should then join Missiessy at Martinique, take that Admiral under his command, and return to Europe with all speed to take part in the grand invasion of England, to

which all these distant operations were chiefly intended to act as a screen.

Nelson did not loiter at Malta, but began at once to beat up towards Toulon : he calculated on reaching his old station in about a week ; but the wind, which still blew from the north-west, again increased to a gale, and continued so stormy that it was the 8th of March before he again reached the Gulf of Palma. There he anchored till the weather should become more favorable, and the respite was of some service to himself and his crew, who both wanted rest. From the day that he first heard of the French being at sea, he had kept the fleet prepared for battle night and day ; not a bulkhead had been up ; but now he indulged all but himself with a few days' ease, he himself still counting the hours till he could again put to sea, and renew his watch. He had learnt that Lauriston and his troops were still on board the French fleet, and conjecturing from that circumstance that they would start again as soon as the equinoctial gales were over, he changed his plan of resuming his station off Cape Sicie, and proposed to bear across to the coast of Catalonia, in order that the news of his being at such a distance might encourage Villeneuve to leave Toulon earlier. On the 13th of March he reached the longitude of Toulon at a distance of about fifty miles to the south, and learnt that the French were ready to sail ; pressing onwards to the coast of Spain he showed himself off Barcelona, and then off the Balearic Islands, and then fell back towards Sardinia, and for the next three weeks remained in Palma Bay, waiting with feverish anxiety for news of the enemy being again at sea.

There, on the 4th of April, he learnt that the event for which he was so anxiously hoping had taken place. Villeneuve had sailed again on the 30th of March, steering at first towards the south, but presently changing his course and making directly for the Straits. His instructions were

still nearly the same that they had been three months before ; the principal point in which they had been altered being that they now contained an injunction to proceed up the western coast of Spain as far as Cadiz, to effect a junction with a portion of the Spanish fleet lying in that harbour. Nelson's first idea, as on the former occasion, was to protect Sicily and Egypt, and with this view he worked down towards the Barbary coast to make sure that they had not passed to the eastward ; then, in order "to leave as little as possible to chance," he fell back upon Palermo, spreading his frigates and small craft around him in every direction to obtain intelligence. By the 10th he had traversed the sea between Sardinia, Sicily, and Cape Bon so completely that he felt sure that the enemy were still to the westward of him ; and accordingly to the westward he himself also steered, slowly, for the wind was right in his teeth, but with frigates a-head to look out for news. On the 16th, the *Leviathan*, 74, Captain Bayntun, spoke a trading vessel, from which he learnt that, nine days before, a fleet which could hardly be any other than that of which he was in search, had passed Cape de Gatte, steering to the westward ; and Nelson declared that the mere thought of the mischief which they might do was enough to kill him : a few hours later he learnt that on the 8th they had passed Gibraltar, and, full of apprehension, though not having yet had time distinctly to make up his mind what was most to be apprehended, he instantly decided on following them to whatever country he might have reason to think them bound, when he should reach Gibraltar. The next day he learnt that they had effected a junction with a portion of the Cadiz squadron under Admiral Gravina, and from that circumstance he inferred that they were bound not to the West Indies, nor to South America, but to Ireland, or what came to the same thing, to Brest, to add the fleet in that harbour to their force : as he was leaving no French force behind him in the Mediterranean, he judged a few

frigates and sloops sufficient to protect the interests of ourselves and our allies in that sea, and with the rest of his fleet he pushed on for the Straits.

He had great difficulties to encounter : the wind, which for a day or two had favoured M. de Villeneuve's course to Gibraltar, had again settled in the west, blowing so strongly in his teeth, that in nine days he only advanced sixty-five leagues ; it was not until the last day of the month that he reached Gibraltar, and then the wind, more unfavorable than ever, detained him for five days more before it allowed him to pass through the Straits. But this last delay, however vexatious, was not an entire loss of time, for the fleet was in great want of provisions and water, which during these days, Captain Keats procured for it at Tetuan. It was a more serious grievance that even now no certain news could be procured of the course taken by the enemy after the junction of the two fleets at Cadiz. Sir John Orde had sent no information respecting them to Gibraltar ; and Nelson was still left to mere conjecture, on which it acquired all his decision of character, and utter abandonment of self, to resolve to act. Up to the morning of the 6th of May, the wind was still foul. Many of the men and officers had, as usual, gone on shore ; and the linen from the fleet had been landed to be washed. Nelson remained on board pondering anxiously but resolutely on his future course, when suddenly he saw signs of a change of wind. In an instant the Victory fired her signal-gun to recall every one to his ship ; in the afternoon an easterly breeze carried the fleet through the Straits, and Nelson steered towards Cape St. Vincent in the hope of obtaining news. Universal rumour pointed out the West Indies as M. Villeneuve's destination, and he was already beginning, in deference to it, to give up his own opinion in favour of Ireland, when, on arriving in Lagos Bay, the rumour was confirmed to him in a manner which left him no room for further doubt.

Donald Campbell, an admiral in the Portuguese service, had, as we have seen in 1797, given Lord St. Vincent valuable information respecting the movements of the Spanish fleet, and now he came on board the Victory to assure Nelson as a fact within his personal and certain knowledge, that the combined fleets had gone to the West Indies. From other sources, Nelson learnt that they consisted together of eighteen sail of the line, seven frigates, and a few smaller vessels; that, besides the troops on board the French ships, the Spaniards also carried a strong and well-appointed land-force of both infantry and cavalry, and that they had sailed from Cadiz on the 10th of April. They had, therefore, the start of him by a month, and they nearly doubled his numbers; for, as he had judged it necessary to leave Sir R. Bickerton to command in the Mediterranean during his absence, he had with him but ten sail of the line and three frigates; and of these some were in a very bad state. But, in spite of all such considerations, he felt it his duty to follow the enemy; and, having completed the victualling of his fleet at Lagos, on the evening of the 11th of May he made all sail and steered straight for Barbadoes. Hitherto, as he said "his lot had been hard, and the enemy most fortunate; but things might change, and patience and perseverance would do much." If he failed to find or hear of them in the West Indies, he reckoned that he should be back "at Cadiz by the end of June; in short, before they could know where he was gone to."

When he got into the open sea he was fortunate in a steadily fair wind: and though, as he said, if he were going ten knots an hour the whole way, he should not think it fast enough, he, nevertheless, reckoned that he must be gaining rapidly on the chase. He supposed the enemy to be bound for Martinique, in order from thence to proceed against Jamaica; but by the time they reached Martinique, he hoped to be within a fortnight

of them ; and at Barbadoes he expected to obtain certain intelligence of their movements, and probably a reinforcement for his own fleet : for Admiral Cochrane, who, as has been already mentioned, had followed Missiessy from Rochefort, was known to be now off that island, and Nelson had sent forward the Amazon frigate to give him notice of his approach and of his intentions.

The idea of an approaching battle always put him in spirits, and as he neared his point he drew up a plan of attack, embracing the most probable contingencies of wind, weather, and the position in which the enemy might be found ; and communicated it to his captains, with whom, according to his practice, he continually, as opportunity offered, talked over his ideas and intentions in detail, thus preparing them for what was to be done beforehand, because, on the day of battle, signals were, in his eyes, of but little use.\* On the 4th of June he

\* This plan of attack is so formed on general principles, that it will probably be found to a great extent applicable, even in spite of the great change in naval tactics which the introduction of steam cannot fail to occasion ; it is therefore here given at length :—

“ The business of an English Commander-in-chief being first to bring an enemy’s fleet to battle, on the most advantageous terms to himself (I mean that of laying his ships close on board the enemy, as expeditiously as possible) ; and secondly, to continue them there, without separating, until the business is decided ; I am sensible beyond this object it is not necessary that I should say a word, being fully assured that the Admirals and Captains of the fleet I have the honour to command, will, knowing my precise object, that of a close and decisive battle, supply any deficiency in my not making signals ; which may, if extended beyond these objects, either be misunderstood, or, if waited for, very probably, from various causes, be impossible for the Commander-in-chief to make ; therefore it will only be requisite for me to state, in as few words as possible, the various modes in which it may be necessary for me to obtain my object, on which depends, not only the honour and glory of our country, but possibly its safety, and with it that of all Europe, from French tyranny and oppression.

“ If the two fleets are both willing to fight, but little manœuvring is necessary ; the less the better ;—a day is soon lost in that business ; therefore I will only suppose that the enemy’s fleet being to leeward, standing close upon a wind on the starboard tack, and that I am nearly a head of them, standing on the larboard tack, of course I should weather them. The weather must be supposed to be moderate ; for if it be a gale of wind, the manœuvring of both fleets is

reached Carlisle Bay. It was afterwards learnt that, at that moment the French were at Martinique, on the point of sailing; but the intelligence which Nelson received forced him, sorely against his will, to a different conclusion. The evening before, a letter had arrived from General Brereton, the governor of Sainte Lucie, announcing that, on the 28th of May, the enemy had passed that island, steering to the southward. It was impossible to doubt information sent by one of our own generals; and, as it seemed to prove Tobago or Trinidad

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but of little avail, and probably no decisive action would take place with the whole fleet. Two modes present themselves: one to stand on, just out of gunshot, until the van-ship of my line would be about the centre ship of the enemy, then make the signal to wear together, then bear up, engage with all our force the six or five van-ships of the enemy, passing, certainly, if opportunity offered, through their line. This would prevent their bearing up, and the action, from the known bravery and conduct of the Admirals and Captains, would certainly be decisive: the second or rear-ships of the enemy would act as they please, and our ships would give a good account of them, should they persist in mixing with our ships. The other mode would be, to stand under an easy but commanding sail, directly for their headmost ship, so as to prevent the enemy from knowing whether I should pass to leeward or windward of him. In that situation, I would make the signal to engage the enemy to leeward, and to cut through their fleet about the sixth ship from the van, passing very close; they being on a wind, and you going large, could cut their line when you please. The van-ships of the enemy would, by the time our rear came abreast of the van-ship, be severely cut up, and our van could not expect to escape damage. I would then have our *rear ship*, and every ship in succession, wear, continue the action with either the van-ship, or second ship, as it might appear most eligible from her crippled state; and this mode pursued, I see nothing to prevent the capture of the five or six ships of the enemy's van. The two or three ships of the enemy's rear must either bear up or wear; and, in either case, although they would be in a better plight probably than our two van-ships (now the rear) yet they would be separated, and at a distance to leeward, so as to give our ships time to reft; and by that time, I believe, the battle would, from the judgment of the Admirals and Captains, be over with the rest of them. Signals from these moments are useless, when every man is disposed to do his duty. The great object is for us to support each other, and to keep close to the enemy, and to leeward of them.

"If the enemy are running away, then the only signals necessary will be, to engage the enemy on arriving up with them; and the other ships to pass on for the second, third, &c., giving, if possible, a close fire into the enemy in passing, taking care to give our ships engaged, notice of your intention."



to be the intended object of attack, General Myers, the commander of our forces at Barbadoes, offered to embark in the fleet with two thousand men. The troops were got on board with all speed; and the next morning, Nelson, taking with him Admiral Cochrane with the Northumberland and Spartiate, the only two ships at that moment on the station, (since Admiral Dacres, the Commander-in-chief at Jamaica, had kept the rest of Cochrane's squadron for the defence of that island), sailed to Tobago, with the signal for battle flying. Now at last he seemed certain of meeting the enemy, and he would have thought it treason to his followers to doubt of the result. He did not deny that "Villeneuve and Gravina had a very pretty fiddle, but did not believe that they knew how to play upon it." They were not at Tobago, and a sloop was sent forward to Trinidad to learn whether they were in the Gulf of Paria. As if everything were fated at this important moment to mislead him, it happened that, as our fleet approached, a merchant at Tobago, uncertain whether it were friend or foe, had sent out a schooner to reconnoitre it; and the signal on which he had fixed to indicate to him that the newcomers were friends, was the very same by which the sloop was to announce that the enemy were at Trinidad. Nelson therefore, now pressed on more eagerly and confidently than ever. Later in the day, an American merchantman was spoken with whose captain falsely affirmed that, a day or two before, he had been boarded by the French off Grenada. The next morning, the 7th, as our fleet approached Trinidad, Fort Abercrombie was seen to be on fire, and the unavoidable inference was that it had been burnt by a hostile attack. After all this, it was very strange, when in the evening the fleet anchored off the island, to learn that no enemy had been seen there. Disappointed and grieved in his inmost heart, at daylight, on the 8th, Nelson prepared to return to Barbadoes; but he had not worked

out of the Gulf of Paria, when a boat arrived from that island, with the news that on the evening of the 4th the enemy had been preparing to sail to Dominica. On the 9th Nelson reached Grenada, and there heard that on the 6th they had passed Dominica, steering to the northwards, and had taken a squadron of sugar-laden vessels belonging to our merchants. They had also made one conquest of territory. Some little time before, Captain Hood had taken possession of the Diamond Rock close to Martinique, had erected on it three batteries, containing in all five guns, and had entrusted its defence to Captain Maurice and a garrison of little more than a hundred men. The judgment which had dictated its occupation was sufficiently proved by the annoyance which it had caused to the French vessels going to or from Martinique, and by the force which Villeneuve now employed for its reduction. Two ships of the line, a frigate, a schooner, a whole flotilla of gunboats, and between three and four hundred soldiers, surrounded it on the 31st of May; but so great was the natural strength of the position, and so resolute the defence made by Captain Maurice, that it cost the assailants two days' uninterrupted bombardment, and a loss of three gunboats and at least seventy men to compel the little handful of men who held it to a surrender. The best chance of overtaking the enemy which now remained appeared to depend upon their having gone to attack Antigua or St. Christopher's. To those islands, therefore, Nelson now hastened. He touched at Monserrat, but got no news which he could trust there; from thence he hastened to Antigua, where he disembarked General Myers and his soldiers; and at midday, on the 13th, believing that the enemy, who had received an addition to their force of two sail of the line, had quitted the West Indies for Europe, he too turned his steps homeward, hoping either to fall in with, or to outstrip them on their return.

To the mistaken information sent by General Brereton

it was alone owing that he had failed to encounter them. Had he been left to his own judgment, he would have been off Port Royal just as they were coming out, and the battle would have been fought on the very spot where Rodney had defeated De Grasse. But he was comforted by the reflection that he had saved our West Indian islands, and above two hundred sugar-laden ships, from their grasp; and that this great advantage had been secured by the mere knowledge of his arrival in these waters, for that they were aware of it he had no doubt. After he had passed Madeira he had seen a French corvette watching him for two days; and he had reason to believe that she had joined them on the 1st of June, if not before, as after that day all the movements had been made in a hurry. On quitting the West Indies he sent Admiral Cochrane back to Barbadoes with the Northumberland alone, taking with him the Spartiate, 74, as a reinforcement to his own fleet, which would be greatly needed in the event of a battle. But, though still desirous to fight the combined fleets, he no longer thought it necessary to bring them to action at the first moment that he might see them. While searching for Villeneuve in January, and believing him to be bound for Egypt, he had looked upon the destruction of his fleet as of so much consequence, that he would have been willing to have sacrificed half of his own to effect it; and, as long as they were still among our West India Islands, the same feeling would have prompted him to have attacked them at all risks: but now that they were no longer in a region where they could do us any immediate injury, he considered himself as no longer called upon or even at liberty to hazard the force under his command in an encounter with a foe superior in numbers, by at least one-half, without some circumstances in his favour to counterbalance such overwhelming odds. He thought it probable that, if he should so far overtake them as to come in sight of them, their inferior skill

would give him some opportunity of attacking them with advantage, and for such an opportunity he made up his mind to wait, again explaining his views and intentions to his captains; and by such communication showing them indirectly, ever fearless and even audacious as he was, on what sound calculations his boldness was always founded, how little courage without judgment was to be valued, and how little he approved of the conduct of "those hot-brained people who fought at immense disadvantage without any adequate object."

It is a remarkable proof of Nelson's sagacity in divining the causes of the actions of others, that he thought it highly probable that the enemy's return to Europe was caused by direct orders from France, for we have already seen that this was the case; and, as he looked upon it as very uncertain to what harbour they might be steering, he despatched what frigates or small craft he could spare to Europe, in advance of his fleet, to bear intelligence to the British admirals off the French and Spanish coasts, and especially to the commander off Ferrol, of the probable approach of M. Villeneuve's fleet. His own return back was less speedy than his passage out had been. The wind continued to blow mainly from the east, and it was the 17th of July before he came in sight of the Spanish coast. Once or twice he had heard of the enemy on his way. The *Amazon*, on the 18th of June, fell in with an American trading vessel, which two days before, in about lat.  $27^{\circ}$  N., long.  $50^{\circ}$  W., had seen a fleet of twenty-two sail of men-of-war steering to the northward, and had correctly supposed them to be the French fleet from Martinique on its way home. He calculated that he was now within eighty leagues of them, and three days later, at midnight, with the weather nearly calm, he saw three planks which he suspected to come from them. As he drew nearer to Europe, and the chance of his overtaking them diminished, he sent the *Amphion* and *Amazon* on before

him, to learn if they had re-entered the Mediterranean or Cadiz, enjoining their captains to keep his own approach a profound secret. On the 29th of June he learnt, from a Spanish bark which he captured, that the combined fleets had passed in sight of Cape Blanco, in the Azores, but this was the last piece of information that he obtained respecting them. On the 18th of July he came in sight of Cape Spartel; the next day he anchored in Gibraltar Bay, and went on shore for the first time (as he recorded the fact in his Diary) for above two years.

Before reaching Gibraltar, he fell in with Admiral Collingwood, who, with the *Dreadnought* and two more sail of the line, was cruising off Cadiz. He had been sent to that station with almost discretionary powers, as soon as it was known to our Admiralty that Villeneuve had left the Mediterranean, and that, in all probability, Nelson had pursued him; and for the last two months he had been watching the Spanish coast between Cape St. Vincent and Gibraltar with great care, but without finding anything to do, or even to report to the authorities at home. His squadron had originally been stronger, but when he learnt that Nelson was pursuing the combined fleets with only ten ships, he had sent the two fastest sailers after him, which had, however, failed to find him. The two friends now exchanged ideas, and Collingwood expressed his opinion that the object of the enemy's naval campaign, taken as a whole, was, and always had been, our own territory; that the run to the West Indies had been intended to distract our naval force, and that Villeneuve would now try to effect a junction with the *Ferrol*, *Rochefort*, and *Brest* squadrons, and with this vast united armament proceed to Ireland. This coincided to a great extent with Nelson's original idea; but he felt it impossible in any degree to act upon it till all chance of the French trying to re-enter the Mediterranean was over. For, as he had crossed the Atlantic with every sail set, he thought it

probable that he was ahead of them ; being the more inclined to believe this, because he knew that their fleet had been very sickly, while, thanks to his habitual care of the health of his crews, he had not lost a single officer nor man in his entire voyage. At last, on the 25th, he received positive information that on the 19th of June the enemy had been seen by our brig *Curieux*, six degrees more to the north than the American trader had seen them on the 16th ; and, as this fact, which was certain, evidently increased the probability of their being bound for our Channel, he at once made sail in the same direction. His resolution now was to go straight to Cape Clear to join Lord Gardner, or to Ushant to join Admiral Cornwallis, according to the circumstances which might arise to guide him in his passage up the Bay of Biscay. The wind, which was northerly, baffled him vexatiously as he pressed on : though if he had, as he suspected, outstripped them in his way across the Atlantic, there was reason to hope that it might delay them still more ; and as he kept an eager look-out for intelligence, chance threw in his way a source from which he contrived to extract some by the exercise of a sagacity which Southey compares rather to the exaggerations of the whimsical novelist, than to the ordinary events of real history. One of his frigates spoke an American trader which, a little beyond the Azores, had fallen in with a vessel dismasted, deserted by her crew, and bearing evident marks of having been set on fire. The Americans had carried away from her a few seamen's jackets and a log-book, which were now given up to the captain of the frigate, and by him were brought to Nelson. In the log-book was found a scrap of dirty paper full of figures, and the last words of the log were " Two large ships on the W.N.W." Nelson first pronounced the vessel to have been an English privateer, and the figures on the scrap of paper to have been written by a Frenchman ; and, as this second fact stimulated his curiosity, he proceeded to give

the matter a minute attention, and presently exclaimed : " I can explain the whole ; the jackets are of French manufacture, and prove the vessel to have been in possession of the enemy. She had been chased and taken by the two large ships seen in the W.N.W. The prize-master, having been put on board in a hurry, had forgotten to take with him his reckoning: there is none in the log-book, and the figures on the scrap of paper contain the vessel's work for the number of days since she left Corvo,\* with an unaccounted-for run, which I take to have been the chase, in his endeavour to find out her situation by back-reckoning. By some mismanagement, I conclude she was run on board of by one of the enemy's ships, and so dismasted. Not liking delay (for I am satisfied those two ships were the advanced ones of the French fleet), and fancying we were close at their heels, they set fire to their prize, and abandoned her in a hurry. If this explanation be correct, I infer from it that they are gone more to the northward ; and more to the northward I shall look for them." It was subsequently proved, almost beyond a doubt, that this explanation was correct in every point ; for the *Mars*, a Liverpool privateer which, a few days before, had taken a Spanish galleon, with treasure on board worth more than half a million of money, was, on the 3rd of July, when about a degree to the north-east of Corvo, captured herself by Villeneuve's fleet, who subsequently set fire to her and abandoned her. The inference which Nelson drew was equally correct, that the combined fleets were gone to the northward of the Spanish harbours ; and to the northward he now therefore bent his way with greater confidence than ever, but the wind was against him. He felt every moment an age, as the enemy's fleet might be already off Ireland or in the Channel ; but in spite of his utmost exertions, he could make but little progress, nor could he

\* Corvo is the most northern of the Azores.

obtain any information. At last, on the 15th of August, he joined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant. That commander had seen nothing of the enemy; and as it seemed certain, therefore, that they had not entered the Channel, Nelson left the main body of his fleet to reinforce him; and, with the *Victory* and *Superb*, proceeded to England to recruit his strength on shore after his unparalleled exertions.

At Spithead he learnt that the combined enemy, though they had escaped himself, had not succeeded in avoiding an encounter with all our fleets. As has been already mentioned, when Admiral Cochrane followed *Missiessy* to the West Indies, Sir Robert Calder, who had been Lord St. Vincent's flag-captain on the 14th of February, had been appointed to the command of the squadron appointed to cruise off Ferrol. It had originally consisted of only ten sail of the line; but the *Curieux*, which, as already mentioned, had seen the combined fleets on the 19th of June, had reached England with her news on the 9th of July, and Lord Barham, who had lately replaced Lord Melville at the head of the Admiralty, with great judgment instantly sent her out again with orders to Admiral Stirling, who was lying off Rochefort with five ships, to raise the blockade of that port and unite himself to Calder. The two squadrons had joined on the 15th, and on the 19th Calder received the further intelligence, which Nelson had so prudently sent forward, that M. Villeneuve was hastening back to Europe. Three days afterwards, the combined fleets came in sight. They now consisted of twenty sail of the line, of which six carried 80 guns, and were equal to our first-rates; and they out-numbered us still more in frigates, of which they had seven, while we had only two. Nevertheless Calder at once bore towards them, signalling to his fleet to make all possible sail, and to engage, forming a line of battle in open order. The enemy had been first seen at about eleven o'clock, but, as they were then nearly six leagues



off, it was past four in the afternoon before we got within gunshot of them. The action was in some degree hastened by the gallantry of Captain Prowse of the *Sirius* frigate, who, seeing one of the French frigates with a vessel in tow (the Spanish galleon which had been recaptured three weeks before, with all her treasure on board), endeavoured to cut her off, and forced some of the enemy's line-of-battle ships to bear down to save her. The weather was unusually hazy, and prevented our ships from on all occasions obeying, or even seeing their Admiral's signals, as it also hindered him from clearly discerning the movements of the combined fleet. But he was fortunate in his captains. Captain Gardner in the *Hero*, which, being our leading ship, had a better sight of the enemy than those in the rear, took upon himself to tack without orders, because his position showed him that they also were coming round on the starboard tack. His decision procured him the honour of commencing the engagement; though, owing chiefly to the fog, which rapidly grew more and more dense, it was carried on in such confusion, that he presently found himself without an opponent. It was but a partial action that ensued: five or six of our ships were scarcely engaged at all, and only one, the *Windsor Castle*, 98, Captain Charles Boyles, received any important damage; while our loss of men, which did not amount to two hundred altogether, was principally borne by five ships, the *Prince of Wales*, the flagship, the *Windsor Castle*, the *Malta*, the *Thunderer*, and the *Ajax*.

The enemy were equally unable to bring all their force into vigorous action, but those that were engaged suffered far more severely than ours. At the end of about two hours and a half, two of the Spanish ships, the *Firme*, 78, and the *San Rafael*, 80, struck; the *Espana*, 64, with the French *Atlas*, 74, were with difficulty rescued by their comrades from a similar fate, and were greatly crippled; and their loss in men far more than doubled ours. As far

as the battle had gone, we had gained a very decided advantage, but it was now nearly dark ; and, as the fleets were still so widely scattered that no decisive blow could be dealt that night, our Admiral made the signal to discontinue the battle. He fully intended to renew the action the next morning ; but in the course of the night the two fleets fell off from one another so widely, that, at daybreak on the 23rd, they were seventeen miles apart ; and as M. Villeneuve lay to windward, the resumption of the battle depended chiefly on him. He at first appeared inclined to attack us. He mistakenly interpreted a movement to leeward, which Calder made in order to join and protect the Windsor Castle, which was almost disabled, and the prizes with one or two ships which were lying near them, into the beginning of a flight, and despatched his frigates through his line to announce to his captains his desire to bring on a decisive action. To give effect to his announcement, he bore down towards our line ; and he might have had his wish had he continued to entertain it, for as soon as our ships saw that he was approaching, they gladly hauled closer to the wind to await his attack. The breeze, however, with which he was coming down, was so light, that at four o'clock he was still three leagues from us ; and as, according to the account given by the writers of his nation, he could have no hope of reaching us before dark, and had no inclination for a night action, he hauled his wind, and postponed his further advance till the next day. In the night the wind changed, so that, on the morning of the 24th, we had the weather-gauge, and consequently the power of renewing the battle, in our own hands ; but, by this time, Sir Robert had become apprehensive, not indeed of the result of a second battle, but of ulterior events, which might ensue after a second battle, from which, however successful, he could not hope to come off without sustaining serious damage. Neither Rochefort nor Ferrol were now blockaded, and it

was, therefore, in his view, far from impossible that the squadrons in those harbours might sally forth, combine, and attack him when, if further weakened by a second conflict with Villeneuve, he might be totally unable to resist a fresh antagonist. He had been warned by his recent instructions to be on his guard against such a junction : and neither the warning nor his apprehensions were ill-founded, for in fact the day after Admiral Stirling had joined him, the Rochefort squadron, under Admiral Allemand, had left that harbour ; on the afternoon of the 23rd had passed over the very spot on which, but eighteen hours before, the two fleets had been engaged ; and in all probability it was only the continuance of the hazy weather that hid them both from Allemand's sight.

The two fleets, now agreeing in the wish to avoid any second encounter, bore off : the British fleet towards home, to escort the prizes to a spot sufficiently near our shores to ensure their safe arrival, and then returning to its original station off Cape Ferrol ; and the French and Spaniards steering to the southward, till they reached the northern coast of Spain, and cast anchor in Vigo Bay.

Neither Admiral had cause to rejoice in their recent meeting. Napoleon was incensed beyond measure at Villeneuve, partly for not fighting longer, and partly for fighting at all ; and though he drew up a narrative of the action, according to his notion \* of how it ought to have been fought, in which he claimed the victory for his own fleet, he privately thought of superseding Villeneuve on account of " his excessive pusillanimity," and of " summoning him to Paris to give an account of his conduct." Calder fared worse still. Many years before, Nelson, in justifying his own hardihood, had expressed his conviction, that, whatever the result might be, the country would rather pardon an Admiral for fighting than letting it

\* "Voici comme je la conçois."—'Précis des Evénemens,' xii, 248, quoted by James.

alone. He was evidently judging of the sentiments of the nation at large by his own; and Sir Robert was now doomed to a painful experience of the correctness of that judgment. At first his conduct was regarded with favour, and the result of the battle was looked upon as a success, (which in truth it was), and as a herald of a still more brilliant victory to follow; but, when it was found that, on the 24th he declined to renew the battle, though it was clearly in his power to do so; and when Nelson arrived, and all England rung with the praises of his marvellous skill and sagacity, and courage and energy; and when it was told everywhere how he, with eleven ships, had driven before him the very fleet which another British fleet, though half as strong again, had allowed to escape, the contentment of the people was turned to indignation, and the murmurs became so general and so loud, that Sir Robert Calder felt it due to his own character to demand a court martial. It was held in the last week of the year and the result was that he was found guilty of an error in judgment in not having done his best to renew the battle on the 23rd and 24th of July; but, as the court at the same time formally acquitted him of either cowardice or disaffection, he was only sentenced to be severely reprimanded.

The whole affair was singular in its character, its details, and its result. A precisely similar verdict had doomed Byng to an untimely death. Lord Howe, with far less excuse, for there was no reason to apprehend the arrival of any reinforcement to M. Villaret Joyeuse, had acted in exactly the same manner as Calder; declining to renew the battle when it was manifestly in his power, and when the capture of several crippled French ships seemed likely to be the inevitable result of his doing so, and he had received distinguished honours for what he had done, without ever being called in question for what he had omitted to do. That the court-martial was contented with

sentencing Calder to be reprimanded, when on a similar verdict Byng had been shot, may be attributed partly to the improved temper of the times, and still more to the fact that it was undeniable that on the 22nd he had defeated the enemy, and that there was no precedent in the annals of any country for trying, much less for censuring, a victorious commander. That it should have been thought possible or decent to try him at all, for conduct precisely similar to that for which Lord Howe had received the most marked honours from his sovereign, shows how completely Nelson had altered the whole character of naval warfare. He had taught the nation that nothing was well done which by any possibility could have been better done; and though, in this instance, the comparison of another's actual conduct with the preconception of what he would have achieved had the chance been his, led the nation into injustice, it can hardly be questioned that, had Trafalgar been less decisive, had the enemy ventured on any more naval battles, the country would have profited even by its unjust decision in this case; which proclaimed in indelible characters that, while there might be favour shown to a man who fought contrary to the dictates of strict prudence, there was no longer any toleration for one who did not fight when it was in his power.

## CHAPTER XXX.

1805.

Calder returns to his station, and finds Villeneuve in Ferrol—Calder rejoins Admiral Cornwallis—Villeneuve goes to Cadiz—Collingwood watches them there—Captain Blackwood conveys the news to England—Nelson offers to return at once—His projects—His preparations—His departure from England—Joy of the fleet at his return—Sir R. Calder returns home in the *Prince of Wales*—Narrow escape of the *Agamemnon*—Misconduct of the Portuguese—Blackwood's vigilant watch—Plans of the combined fleet—Nelson's superior sagacity—Napoleon's anger with Villeneuve—The combined fleet puts to sea—Nelson's measures—The battle of Trafalgar—Nelson's signal—His wound and death—Completeness of the victory—Character of Nelson—His funeral—Storm after the battle—Loss and Destruction of most of the prizes—Mutual generosity of all the parties concerned in the battle—Impression produced on the Spaniards.

SIR ROBERT CALDER was eager to return without loss of time to his station, because he had learnt from the prisoners in the two captured ships that Ferrol was, as Nelson had suspected, the port to which Villeneuve was bound ; but, when he first arrived there, on the 29th of July, the combined fleet was not to be seen. They were, as has been mentioned, at that moment in Vigo Bay ; but three days afterwards, when a strong breeze from the south-west had driven the British fleet away, Villeneuve weighed anchor, and in a few hours reached Ferrol, where he was found by the British Admiral on his return. The addition of the fleet previously lying in that harbour raised his force now to twenty-nine sail of the line ; and Sir Robert, who had already sent back Admiral Stirling to resume the blockade of Rochefort, and who had, therefore, now but nine ships

under his command, fairly judging them unable to contend with a fleet above thrice his number, drew off and joined Admiral Cornwallis at Ushant. He had hardly retired when Villeneuve, who had learnt that Admiral Allemand was cruising about the Bay of Biscay, sailed from Ferrol with the view of finding him; and, it may be supposed, after being joined by his squadron, of attacking the Channel fleet still lying off Ushant, and, forcing his way to Brest, to unite his force to that in that harbour. He had already sent out the *Didon*, a splendid 48-gun frigate, to look for his brother officer, but she had had the ill-fortune to fall in with Captain Baker of the *Phoenix*, 42, who, though his ship was in every respect inferior to the French vessel, fought and captured her after a very gallant action. Being thus hindered from receiving any intelligence on which he had calculated, the French Admiral himself went forth to search; but, within two days after he had quitted his port, he was induced to change his course by a singular stratagem. During the afternoon of the 13th of August he was seen at a distance by two of our frigates, the *Iris* and the *Naiad*, who in the evening fell in with the *Phoenix* and her prize, which (as they were both severely shattered by their recent conflict) the *Dragon*, 74, under the command of Captain Griffiths, was accompanying as an escort. Just before they met, the *Dragon* had boarded a Danish vessel, and had given her to understand that she herself belonged to a British fleet of twenty-five sail of the line, to which, to keep up the deceit, she began to make signals. The Danish vessel, as it was intended that she should do, faithfully reported this to the French fleet; and, on receiving this intelligence, M. Villeneuve conceived that his instructions would not warrant his attacking an antagonist of a force so nearly equal to his own; and accordingly he at once turned round and beat down to Cadiz, which he reached on the 21st of August.

Collingwood was still cruising off Cape St. Vincent when

the French hove in sight of that celebrated headland. He had only three sail of the line and a frigate with him, so he retired before them of necessity, and a strong division of them, consisting of sixteen large ships, chased him almost down to the Straits. When they gave up the chase he followed them back, hanging on their skirts till he watched them into Cadiz; and, as soon as he found that they had anchored there, and apparently had no thought of entering the Mediterranean, he despatched Captain Blackwood, of the *Euryalus*, to England with the important news. He, himself, kept off the mouth of the harbour, and began to distress the combined fleet in no small degree by blockading the numerous small forts between Cadiz and Algesiras. The next day he was reinforced by four ships under Sir R. Bickerton, and before the end of the month he was joined also by Sir Robert Calder and his fleet; which Admiral Cornwallis, on hearing of the enemy's movements, had sent to his aid. And with this force, and one or two other ships which subsequently joined him, he continued his watch, daily hoping and expecting M. Villeneuve to come out, till, at the end of September, Nelson arrived to take the command.

Blackwood reached England on the evening of the 1st of September, and, posting up to the Admiralty with his news, he called on his way at Merton, where Nelson had bought a small estate, at four o'clock in the morning. Nelson, always an early riser, was already up and dressed; and, on seeing his friend, exclaimed, "I am sure you bring me news of the French and Spanish fleets: I shall yet have to beat them." He followed Blackwood to town, to offer to return at once to Cadiz, and his proposal was thankfully accepted; the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty vying with one another in the wise eagerness they displayed to be guided solely by his opinions and wishes. Mr. Pitt bade him merely state what amount of force he required to ensure victory, and he should have



it. He explained in reply, that his object was not limited to defeating the enemy ; that he desired to annihilate them, Lord Barham gave him the Navy List to choose his own ships and his own officers. "Choose yourself, my Lord," said the great Admiral, one of the secrets of whose success was perhaps the confidence he felt and always proclaimed in every British officer ; "the same spirit animates the whole profession, you cannot go wrong." He did not take long to make his own preparations, and had given himself scarcely more than three weeks' rest, when on the night of the 13th he quitted his home, and travelling all night, reached Portsmouth the next morning. He went eagerly, because he was going in the performance of his duty ; but the feelings which filled his breast were not such as are prompted by ordinary ambition or pride of conquest. He was neither seeking his own objects, nor trusting in his own arm ; moreover, a foreboding of his own approaching fate was already in his mind, mingling a deeper seriousness with the sadness which could not fail to impress his tender nature on once more quitting his home and his friends. A month before he had told his brother that, had he instead of Calder met the French, they might have been parted for ever, since he knew that the enemy "had meant to make a dead set at the Victory ;" and before quitting London he had called on the upholsterer who had in his charge the coffin which Hallowell had given him after the Nile, and had told him that he should probably want it soon. Who can read unmoved the record of his inmost emotions and aspirations as, on this occasion, he traced them in his private Diary, meant for no eye but his own ; praying, above all things, that he might be enabled to do his duty to his country ; in the second place, and in the second place only, that he himself might return in safety ; but on this point expressing his humble and entire "submission, should it be God's good providence, to cut short his days upon earth." "Not that," as he wrote to his

friends,\* he was "low spirited, or fancying that anything was to happen to him; on the contrary, his mind was calm, and intent only on destroying our inveterate foe." But the belief that he should fall in the battle, which he was now going forth to seek, was hardly less strong than his confidence in victory.

The scene that ensued when, at noon the next day, he went on board his ship is easier to feel than to describe. The whole population of the town was collected in the streets through which he was expected to pass; not so much to do him honour as to gratify themselves by gazing on the hero whom all loved as much even as they admired him. Veteran tars, who had fought under Keppel and Rodney, under Hawke and Boscawen; and who, in spite of their natural reverence for their own commanders, whose courage and skill had led themselves to battle and victory, told how far the best and bravest of them all were inferior to Nelson; mothers and wives of the existing generation of sailors, on whom the countless tales of his gentle humanity, of his thoughtful kindness, had made a deeper impression than his all-conquering heroism; others, too, who less immediately interested in warlike or professional topics, thought perhaps more of his pure disinterested patriotism, of his absolute devotion of himself, and all his genius, and all his energy to the performance of his duty to his country: but, however different may have been the foundation of the feeling, all were animated with the same sentiment of almost personal attachment to him, which probably no man that ever lived has inspired in an equal measure. In some degree to elude the populace his gig had come round to Southsea Beach; but its place soon became known, and the vast crowd lined the whole way from his hotel to the water's edge. As he came out, one deafening cheer at first broke forth: it was often

\* See 'Despatches,' vii. 33, 56.

repeated, but often too it was silenced before testimonies of a deeper feeling, as the excitement of the scene moved many to tears, and others, full of uncontrollable anxiety for his safety, knelt before him as he passed and invoked blessings on his head. A guard of soldiers, who tried to clear a path for him, were absorbed in the throng; and the officer, who would have bid them use their bayonets to clear the way for him, was compelled to retreat before the resolute and indignant will of the whole people. No threats nor fears could shake the determination of the weakest among them to gaze till the last moment on their beloved champion. Nelson was almost as much moved as they were, and with tears in his eyes revealed the gratitude with which he returned their affection, remarking to Captain Hardy, who was his companion, "I had their huzzas before; I have their hearts now."

The next morning, Sunday, the 15th of September, at 8 o'clock, the Victory sailed. She was accompanied by the Euryalus frigate alone: other ships were to follow as soon as they were ready; but Nelson himself would not lose a moment. He had written a week before to beg Collingwood to remain as second in command, and had full confidence that he should receive the fleet from him in as good order as skilful care could keep it. As he passed Plymouth, the Ajax and Thunderer came out to join him; but the wind was foul, and, as it blew very fresh, he was unable to proceed with the speed which his impatience desired. As he approached the fleet he sent the Euryalus forward to Collingwood to desire that no salute should be fired, and no colours hoisted; and he wrote also to Gibraltar to beg the Governor to exert his authority with the editor of the Gazette published there, to prevent any notice being given to the enemy of the arrival of himself, or of any reinforcements to the fleet; since, the weaker that was supposed to be, the greater was the chance of Villeneuve coming

out. He was ten days in reaching Lisbon, and the little wind that there was was still so foul that two days more elapsed before he arrived off Cape St. Vincent. At last, on the 28th, he joined Collingwood off Cadiz, and found him with twenty-three sail of the line, and an inshore squadron of six line-of-battle ships more. He was even more moved at rejoining his old comrades, and at their reception of him, than he had been on quitting Portsmouth. Again to quote his own words, "the officers who came on board to welcome his return forgot his rank as Commander-in-chief in the enthusiasm with which they greeted him," and the feeling of their confidence in him naturally increased his confidence in them. It would, in his eyes have been a great injustice to those under him to doubt that, "let the battle come when it might, it would never have been surpassed." He approached near enough to Cadiz to count the fleet of the combined enemy also; which he made out to consist of thirty-five or thirty-six sail of the line: and then, to prevent his force from being seen by them, and also to prevent the possibility of a westerly gale, such as might be expected at that season, driving him into the Mediterranean, he fell back sixteen or eighteen leagues, towards Cape St. Mary's, leaving the *Euryalus* and *Hydra* off the harbour's mouth. As yet he had hardly as many ships as he desired for the total destruction of the enemy; but, as he wrote to Sir A. Ball, "he had come, not to find difficulties, but to remove them:" and, a day or two after his arrival, he was forced to weaken his fleet by sending five of them, under Admiral Louis, to Gibraltar; partly to get provisions and water, and partly to ascertain, and perhaps to check the movements of a Spanish squadron in Carthagená. He diminished his strength still further by sending home the *Prince of Wales*, a splendid first-rate, which bore the flag of Sir Robert Calder. For, by this time, the public discontent at that officer's conduct in the

battle of July had become so general, that the Admiralty had ordered a court-martial to be assembled to investigate it: and Sir Robert pressed upon Nelson so earnestly not to disgrace him by removing him from his ship in the face of the fleet, that Nelson complied. He was at that moment "expecting the enemy to put to sea, every day, hour, and moment:" but he felt the duties of humanity "to a brother officer in affliction" superior to every other claim; though he feared, as he told Lord Barham, in reporting the circumstances, that he should incur the censure of the Admiralty for his compliance.\*

In the course of the first few days of October, four or five more ships arrived: among them the Royal Sovereign, into which Collingwood shifted his flag, and Nelson's own old favourite, the *Agamemnon*, under his well-tryed and valued comrade, Sir Edward Berry. She had had a narrow escape on her way. The squadron from Rochefort had come down to the Portuguese coast, in hopes that it might be possible for it to join Villeneuve in Cadiz, and as Berry approached Cape Finisterre, it saw, and chased him. He counted the ships, and found them a three-decker, five two-deckers, and two frigates: but confiding in the *Agamemnon's* speed, which Nelson himself had so often proved, he held on his course; though his doing so brought him for a short time within gunshot of the three-decker. He started all his water, and, keeping up every sail which a very fresh breeze would permit, had the satisfaction of seeing that he gained on her, though an 80-gun ship which accompanied her gained on him. He ran out his stern-chasers and prepared for action; but when the French Admiral saw that the rest

\* The full extent of the magnanimity displayed by Nelson in this instance can hardly be appreciated, unless it be remembered that it had been owing to Sir Robert Calder's interference that Lord St. Vincent had omitted the expected mention of Nelson's great services on the 14th February; and that Nelson had always believed Sir Robert to be jealous of and unfriendly towards him.

of his squadron was outsailed, he recalled the single ship; and the *Agamemnon* was left to pursue her course without further molestation.

Still Nelson kept watching the enemy "as a cat watches a mouse,"\* hoping either to provoke or to lure them out. He thought it might be possible to attack them as they lay, by means of congreve rockets;† when, even should no ships be burnt, their position would be rendered so unsafe and disagreeable that they would risk an action rather than remain in it: but he placed greater faith still in their want of supplies. They had endeavoured to introduce provisions in vessels under the Danish flag; but, before his arrival, Collingwood had very properly disregarded the plea of neutrality that the masters of the Danish vessels set up; and had detained them and sent them to Gibraltar. And Nelson followed his example, and wrote to the Admiralty to claim their support for this line of conduct. He was still more annoyed by the conduct of the Portuguese, who, at this moment, were so entirely under the control of the Spaniards that they hardly ventured to supply our ships with refreshments from Lagos; while under the direction of the Spanish or French consul, a sentinel even threatened to fire on our boats which were taking in more water than the consul judged to be necessary. Nelson's firmness, however, soon put a stop to this insulting conduct, more degrading to the Portuguese themselves than injurious to us; and his threats of instant retaliation, if any more insults should be offered to his men, roused the Portuguese Governor to a better sense of what was due to us, and to a conviction that it was safer to offend the Spanish or French Govern-

\* 'Despatches,' vii. 92.

† It is very singular, considering that Nelson was thus supplied with this new and formidable missile now, that about eight years elapsed before they were used in our army. In that they were first employed by Sir John Hope's division on the Adour in February, 1814.—See Yonge's 'Life of Wellington,' i. 517.

ment than ours, as long as such a fleet and such an Admiral lay in front of him. He was in great want of frigates. According to his calculation, ten, with three or four fast-sailing brigs, were the smallest number which could enable him adequately to perform all the duties expected of him : yet the whole force of that kind which he actually had with him consisted, at first, of only two frigates and a schooner. Blackwood's great ability and untiring zeal made what amends a single man could make for the deficiency, and he watched the fleet in Cadiz so closely that their every movement was communicated to Nelson almost as soon as it was made. On the 5th of October he reported that they had again taken on board the troops which they had landed on first arriving in harbour : and, as Nelson also learnt that the Carthagena squadron appeared ready for sea, he thought it probable that the two fleets would come out at the same time, and endeavour to effect a junction. Whither they were bound was unknown. Collingwood leant to the opinion that they were waiting for an easterly wind, and that therefore their aim was certainly to go to the westward. Nelson felt sure that the Mediterranean was their destination : and Nelson was right, for Villeneuve's instructions were to convey the troops he had with him to Naples, that they might there join the army with which the French General St. Cyr was aweing the Italians into acquiescence in the incorporation of nearly half the country with the French empire. He was then to enter Toulon, victual his fleet, and add to it two or three ships which were awaiting him in that harbour ; when, being stronger by far than any force likely to be at our command in the Mediterranean, he would be able to inflict upon our possessions and interests in that sea unchecked injury in any direction, which the Emperor at the moment should deem advisable. Expecting now that every hour might bring the two fleets face to face, Nelson applied himself to drawing up a carefully-considered plan

of attack, as far as he could "venture to guess at the very uncertain position in which he might find the enemy;" and, on the 9th, he issued a copy to each of the Admirals and Captains of the fleet. On his first arrival he had given them all a general idea of it, and its novelty and simplicity\* had struck them all, as well as its power, and all longed for the hour when they might prove its efficacy.†

\* 'Despatches,' vii. 60.

† Every circumstance relating to Trafalgar is so interesting, and also so full of instruction, that it seems best to give the whole of this most remarkable memorandum.

"*Memorandum.* (*Secret.*)

"Victory, off Cadiz, 9th October, 1805.

"Thinking it almost impossible to bring a fleet of forty sail of the line into a line of battle in variable winds, thick weather, and other circumstances which must occur, without such a loss of time that the opportunity would probably be lost of bringing the enemy to battle in such a manner as to make the business decisive, I have therefore made up my mind to keep the fleet in that position of sailing (with the exception of the first and second in command) that the order of sailing is to be the order of battle, placing the fleet in two lines of sixteen ships each, with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-decked ships, which will always make, if wanted, a line of twenty-four sail, on whichever line the Commander-in-chief may direct.

"The Second in Command will, after my intentions are made known to him, have the entire direction of his line to make the attack upon the enemy, and to follow up the blow until they are captured or destroyed.

"If the enemy's fleet should be seen to withdraw in line of battle, and that the two lines and the advanced squadron can fetch them, they will probably be so extended that their van could not succour their rear.

"I should therefore probably make the Second in Command's signal to lead through, about their twelfth ship from their rear (or wherever he could fetch, if not able to get so far advanced); my line would lead through about their centre, and the advanced squadron to cut two or three or four ships a-head of their centre, so as to ensure getting at their Commander-in-chief, on whom every effort must be made to capture.

"The whole impression of the British fleet must be to overpower from two or three ships a-head of their Commander-in-chief, supposed to be in the centre, to the rear of their fleet. I will suppose twenty sail of the enemy's line to be untouched, it must be some time before they could perform a manœuvre to bring their force compact to attack any part of the British fleet engaged, or to succour their own ships, which indeed would be impossible without mixing with the ships engaged.‡

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‡ In the upper margin of the paper Lord Nelson wrote, and Mr. Scott added to it a reference, as marked in the text,—“the enemy's fleet is supposed to consist of 46 sail of the line, British fleet of 40. If either is less, only a proportionate number of enemy's ships are to be cut off; B. to be  $\frac{1}{2}$  superior to the E. cut off.”



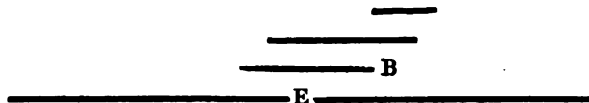
At first it seemed likely that they would not have long to wait. The very next day Blackwood reported that the

“Something must be left to chance ; nothing is sure in a sea-fight beyond all others. Shot will carry away the masts and yards of friends as well as foes ; but I look with confidence to a victory before the van of the enemy could succour their rear, and then that the British fleet would most of them be ready to receive their twenty sail of the line, or to pursue them, should they endeavour to make off.

“If the van of the enemy tacks, the captured ships must run to leeward of the British fleet ; if the enemy wears, the British must place themselves between the enemy and the captured and disabled British ships ; and should the enemy close, I have no fears as to the result.

“The Second in Command will in all possible things direct the movements of his line, by keeping them as compact as the nature of the circumstances will admit. Captains are to look to their particular line as their rallying point. But, in case signals can neither be seen nor perfectly understood, no Captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy.

“Of the intended attack from to windward, the enemy in line of battle ready to receive an attack,



“The divisions of the British Fleet will be brought nearly within gunshot of the enemy’s centre. The signal will most probably then be made for the lee line to bear up together, to set all their sails, even steering sails, in order to get as quickly as possible to the enemy’s line, and to cut through, beginning from the twelfth ship from the enemy’s rear. Some ships may not get through their exact place, but they will always be at hand to assist their friends ; and if any are thrown round the rear of the enemy, they will effectually complete the business of twelve sail of the enemy.

“Should the enemy wear together, or bear up and sail large, still the twelve ships composing, in the first position, the enemy’s rear, are to be the object of attack of the lee line, unless otherwise directed from the Commander-in-chief, which is scarcely to be expected, as the entire management of the lee line, after the intentions of the Commander-in-chief, is [are] signified, is intended to be left to the judgment of the Admiral commanding that line.

“The remainder of the enemy’s fleet, 34 sail, are to be left to the management of the Commander-in-chief, who will endeavour to take care that the movements of the Second in Command are as little interrupted as possible.

“NELSON AND BRONTE.”\*

\* “Cet ordre est considéré comme un chef-d’œuvre par les marins éclairés. On y lit la défaite presque inévitable de toute flotte qui n’opposera à cette attaque d’un genre nouveau que les moyens de défense ordinaires. En considérant l’état de la science navale à cette époque, on ne peut guère s’empêcher

combined fleets had bent their topgallant sails, and were "all but out of the harbour ;" and, as the wind was fair for the Straits, Nelson expected them to sail that night. But they did not move ; and another week, and more, was passed in anxious expectation, till, on the morning of the 19th, their leading ships were seen slowly moving towards the open sea. A fortnight before, Nelson had placed a small advanced squadron of four fast two-deckers, under command of Captain Duff, of the Mars, to lie within sight of the Euryalus. Blackwood at once signalled the welcome intelligence to Duff : he repeated it ; and though the main body of the fleet was fifty miles off, in two hours the news reached the Victory. She at once made the signal to chase, and crowding all sail, the British fleet bore down to meet the enemy they had so long and so eagerly wished to encounter.

Villeneuve had quitted his harbour rather earlier than he would have done had he been influenced solely by strategical considerations : but he knew that Napoleon was greatly displeased with him, had even intimated doubts of his fidelity, had accused him of want of energy, if not of courage, and had sent Admiral Rosilly to supersede him ; and he burnt with a desire to prove to the Emperor that his distrust of him was undeserved. He had spent the time since his arrival in Cadiz in carefully reorganising and supplying his fleet. He had wrought upon the Spanish Commander-in-chief, Admiral Gravina, to follow his example. Gravina had, in consequence, exchanged all his bad ships for the best vessels which the Cadiz dockyards could supply ; and, as far as the space of a blockaded harbour would allow them, both commanders had diligently trained their crews for the conflict which they were about to seek. Villeneuve had even ventured to write to Decrès, still the Minister of Marine at Paris, to

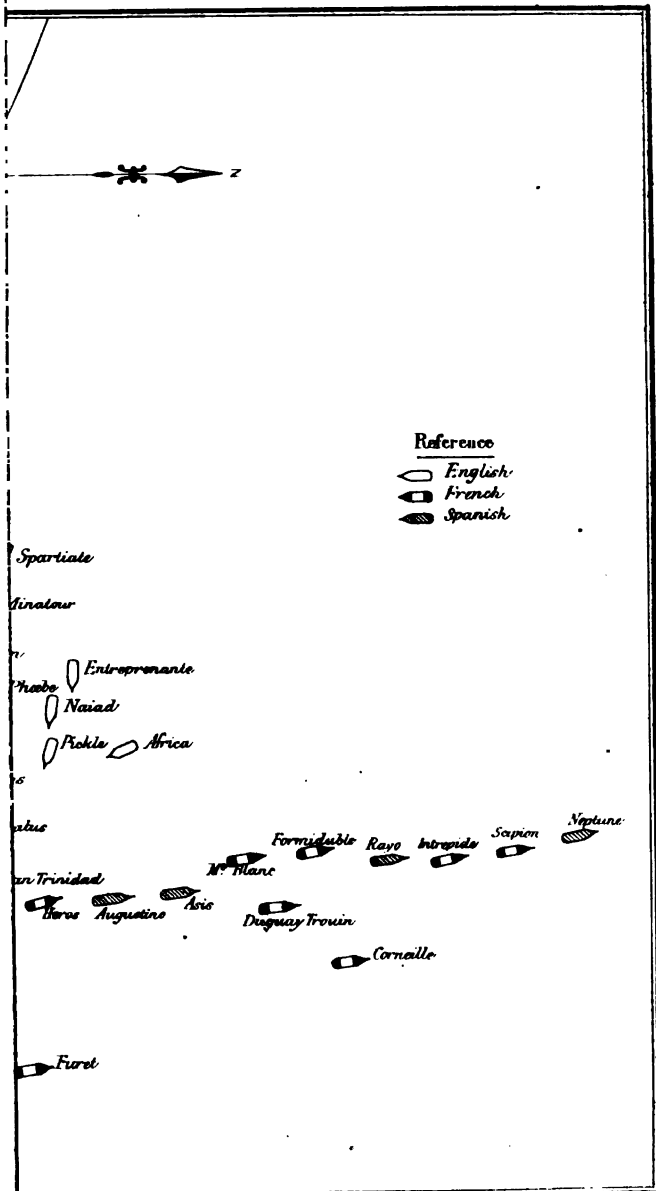
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de penser avec les Anglais que cette attaque était *irrésistible*."—'Victoires et Conquêtes.'

promise him that "Napoleon should soon be satisfied, and that he might reckon on the most splendid success."

A northerly wind had driven our fleet rather to the southward of Cadiz, and, adhering to his belief that the enemy were bound for the Mediterranean, Nelson now despatched a squadron of six of his fastest ships straight towards the mouth of the Straits to deter them from taking that course, and followed himself, with the main body, in the same direction. All that night the wind was very light, so that twenty hours' exertions only brought them to the mouth of the Straits, and when day broke the enemy were not to be seen; but an hour or two later they were discovered to the northward, and we too steered in that direction. Presently heavy rain came on, and the wind freshened so much that Nelson began to fear that they would return into port; but, later in the day, the weather cleared, and, about five in the afternoon, Blackwood, who with great skill kept them constantly in sight telegraphed to the Victory that they seemed determined to go to the westward. That Nelson was resolved that they should not do. But he contented himself with replying to Blackwood that he relied on him to keep sight of them during the night, and arranged a set of signals to indicate from time to time what course they were taking. His orders were so well obeyed, that throughout the whole night every movement that they made was accurately and instantly reported to him. They wore twice, showing a desire to keep the port of Cadiz open to them; and, as this was what alone he dreaded, he stood to the southward during the night, in order to keep out of their sight till morning. At four in the morning of the 21st he was nearly off Cape Spartel, and thinking it now safe to change his course and approach the enemy, he wore and stood to the north-east; and at daybreak, Cape Trafalgar,\* from which

\* It is singular how commonly, in spite of the authority of our two great poets of the century, Scott and Byron, the name of this celebrated headland is



M & N Harcourt 1811



the ensuing battle takes its name, being about twenty-one miles off, bearing E. by S., the combined fleets were seen at a distance of about twelve miles on the starboard-tack, and standing to the southward, so as to be in some degree advancing towards us. We pressed on with all the speed consistent with the necessity of keeping the fleet together, for some of the ships were very heavy sailers; and a little before seven the signal was made from the *Victory* to form the order of sailing in two columns, and to prepare for battle.

When, on the 19th, Blackwood first saw the enemy coming out of Cadiz, he, on his own authority, despatched a fast-sailing brig to Admiral Louis to give him notice of the prospect of an immediate battle, but the intelligence did not reach him in time, and consequently we were considerably inferior in force.\* But that circumstance, though at

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mispronounced by laying the emphasis on the middle syllable. Scott, Introduction to 'Marmion,' says—

“And rolled the thunderbolt of war  
O'er Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar.”

And Byron, 'Childe Harold,' iv. c. 181—

“Which mar  
Alike the Armada's pride, and spoils of Trafalgar.”

In the interesting little sketch of the life of Dr. Scott, Nelson's chaplain, a story is told of Canning's having for a moment defended the wrong pronunciation, by the example of Gibraltar, till he, who did not understand the Peninsular languages, learnt from Dr. Scott that that name was properly *Gibraltàr*, and that the pronunciation in use among us is corrupt. It is clear that one corruption cannot be defended by another; and the verses quoted above ought surely to be held to settle the mode of pronouncing *Trafalgar* beyond dispute.

\* The combined fleets consisted of thirty-three sail of the line, eighteen French and fifteen Spanish, five frigates and two brigs; the British fleet of twenty-seven sail of the line and four frigates.

#### BRITISH FLEET.

100 {	Victory ... ..	...	...	{	Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson.
				{	Captain Hardy.
	Royal Sovereign	...	...		Vice Admiral Collingwood.
					Captain Rotherham.
	Britannia...	...	...	{	Rear-Admiral Lord Northesk.
				{	Captain Bullen.
					Téméraire.

variance with the desire which Nelson had originally expressed, to be furnished with a fleet sufficient to annihilate

### BRITISH FLEET—*continued.*

98	{	Téméraire ... ..	Captain Harvey.
		Prince ... ..	Captain Grindall.
		Neptune ... ..	Captain Fremantle.
80	{	Dreadnought ... ..	Captain Conn.
		Tonnant ... ..	Captain Tyler.
		Belleisle ... ..	Captain Hargood.
74	{	Revenge ... ..	Captain Moorsom.
		Mars ... ..	Captain Duff.
		Spartiate ... ..	Captain Sir F. Laforey.
		Defiance ... ..	Captain Durham
		Conqueror ... ..	Captain Is. Pellew.
		Defence ... ..	Captain Hope.
		Colossus ... ..	Captain Morris
		Leviathan ... ..	Captain Bayntun
		Achille ... ..	Captain King.
		Bellerophon ... ..	Captain Cooke.
64	{	Minotaur ... ..	Captain Mansfield.
		Orion ... ..	Captain Codrington.
		Swiftsure ... ..	Captain Rutherford.
		Ajax* ... ..	Lieut. Pilfold.
		Thunderer* ... ..	Lieut. Stockham.
		Polyphemus ... ..	Captain Redmill.
		Africa ... ..	Captain Digby.
		Agamemnon ... ..	Captain Sir E. Berry.

### FRIGATES:—

Euryalus ... ..	Captain Blackwood.
Sirius ... ..	Captain Prowse.
Naiad ... ..	Captain Dundas.
Phoebe ... ..	Captain Capel.

### COMBINED FLEETS.

#### FRENCH.

The ships marked § were captured or destroyed at Trafalgar; those marked || were captured by Sir R. Strachan a few days afterwards in an action which may be looked on as an offshoot of the great battle.

†80	{	§ Bucentaure ... ..	Vice-Admiral Villeneuve.
		Formidable ... ..	Captain Magendie.
		Neptune ... ..	Rear-Admiral Dumanoir le Pelley.
		§ Indomptable ... ..	Captain Letellier.
74	{	§ Algesiras ... ..	Captain Maïstral.
		Pluton ... ..	Captain Hubart.
		Mont Blanc ... ..	Rear-Admiral Magon.
		§ Intrépide ... ..	Captain Brouard.
			Commodore Cosmao-kerjulien.
			Commodore La Villegris.
			Commodore Infernet.

\* The Captains of these two ships had gone to England, at the entreaty of Sir R. Calder, to give evidence on his trial. Captain Durham, of the *Defiance*, as it was left to his option, refused to go, in anticipation of the battle.

† It must not be forgotten that a French 80-gun ship was equal to a British 98.

the enemy, did not, now that it was at hand, in the least diminish his eagerness for the conflict. This very day\* was the anniversary of that in which his uncle, Captain Suckling, had borne so distinguished a part in Captain Forrest's action in the West Indies, nearly half a century before. The family had ever since kept it as a festival, and Nelson had often expressed a half-playful belief that he too should illustrate it by a victory. He was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. Presently he made a signal for the captains of the frigates to come on board, and to the one with whom he was most intimate, Captain Blackwood, we are indebted for much of our knowledge of what must for ever be most interesting

FRENCH FLEET—*continued*.

74	§ Swiftsure	...	...	Captain Villenadrin.
	§ Aigle	...	...	Captain Gourrege.
	§ Scipion	...	...	Captain Berenger.
	§ Duguay Trouin	...	...	Captain Touffet.
	§ Berwick	...	...	Captain Filiol-Camas.
	§ Argonaute	...	...	Captain Epron.
	§ Achille	...	...	Captain de Nieuport.
	§ Redoutable	...	...	Captain Lucas.
	§ Fougoux	...	...	Captain Beaudouin.
	§ Héros	...	...	Captain Poulain.

## SPANISH.

180	§ Santissima Trinidad	...	...	Rear-Admiral Cisneros.
				Commander Yriarte.
112	Principe de Asturias	...	...	Admiral Gravina.
	§ Santa Anna	...	...	Rear-Admiral Escano.
				Vice-Admiral Alava.
100	§ Rayo	...	...	Captain Gardoqui.
				Commodore Macdonel.
80	§ Neptuno	...	...	Commodore Valdes.
	§ Argonauta	...	...	Commodore Parejus.
	§ Bahama	...	...	Captain Galiano.
	§ Montanes	...	...	Captain Salzedo.
	§ San Augustin	...	...	Captain Cagigal.
74	§ San Ildefonso	...	...	Captain Bargas.
	§ San Juan Nepomuceno	...	...	Captain Churruca.
	§ Monarca	...	...	Captain Argumosa.
	§ San Francisco de Asis	...	...	Captain Flores.
	§ San Justo	...	...	Captain Gaston.
64	San Leandro	...	...	Captain Quevedo.

FRIGATES:—Corneille, Harmonie, Hortense, Rhin, Themis; these were all French.

\* See vol. i., p. 261.



to every Englishman, Nelson's last hours. By eight o'clock the array of the combined fleets was distinctly visible. The attack which Nelson had devised was wholly novel. From the absence of the numbers on which he had originally calculated, he had been forced in some degree to modify his original design, and to dispense with the advanced squadron; and, according to his final arrangement, the British fleet was to bear down upon the enemy in two columns, and to cut their line in two places. The lee column, under Collingwood, he directed to pierce it about twelve ships from the rear; with the weather column he intended himself to break through about the centre, or a ship or two ahead of it: and he reckoned, with confidence, that he should thus overpower the centre and van, or the centre and rear, according to the direction which, at the last moment, he might choose to give to the attack. Villeneuve too, who, though he was far from anticipating so audacious and original a movement, was well aware of the reliance which he placed on the general principle of breaking an antagonist's line, had devised an original and most able plan, by which he hoped to hinder such a manœuvre, or even perhaps to turn it against his assailants. He had drawn up his fleet in two lines,\* alternating with each other, each ship in one line

\* The celebrated French work 'Victoires et Conquêtes,' represents this formation as accidental: Villeneuve's intention having been to array his fleet in a single line. "Il crût devoir ranger ses vaisseaux . . . sur une ligne de bataille bien serrée." A few lines above it says "rangée sur une seule ligne." And it thus explains the doubling which took place, "Nous avons dit que cette ligne était mal formée. L'espace compris entre le Neptune, et le Bucentaure n'était pas suffisant pour les dix vaisseaux qui devaient s'y placer: quelqu'uns se doubleraient; d'autres se trouvaient sous le vent de leur poste qui demeurerait vide, sans qu'ils passent s'y placer." And it must be admitted that this description tallies with the plan of the battle which I have inserted opposite p. 315, more closely than the statement in the text. But it is easily conceivable that that plan, drawn by a British officer, is more to be trusted for the position of our own ships than for that of the enemy's; especially as their fleet was soon thrown into utter disorder. And in speaking of the formation of the combined fleet as not only intentional, but ably

being opposite to the space left between the ships in the other. He formed his line also to the northward, on the larboard tack, a manœuvre which, with the existing wind, still kept Cadiz open to him, and also brought the shoals of Trafalgar and of San Pedro under our lee. Nelson saw this, and signalled to the fleet to prepare to anchor: knowing that, in a battle such as he was resolved to bring on, many of our own ships, as well as the prizes which he anticipated, must be severely crippled; and, should the wind freshen, would be but little able to contend with the perils of a lee-shore. More than once he asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. And his friend replied, that when he considered the superiority of the enemy, their evident resolution to fight the battle fairly out, and their proximity to their own harbours, he thought fourteen or fifteen prizes would be a glorious result. "I shall not, Blackwood, be satisfied with less than twenty." Yet, even in this moment of well-founded

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conceived, I have followed the judgment of Lord Collingwood, as expressed not only in his despatch, but still more clearly in a letter to Sir J. Pasley, (Nelson's Desp. vii. 241), written nearly two months after the battle, and after he had had many conversations with Villeneuve himself. In this letter, after explaining "the difficulty" we had "in getting through" their line "in the manner they were formed," he adds, "these dots will give you an



idea how they were formed, except that they did not make a right line, but the centre bent to leeward; but in half an hour there was nothing like order." It seems inconceivable that Collingwood, a man at all times of the most perfect coolness under fire, and on this occasion the first man to close with the enemy's fleet, should have been mistaken in the formation which it presented when he closed with it. And we must further remember that the authority of the compiler of the "Victories and Conquêtes" for his statement is unknown, as no official report of the battle by any of the French Admirals engaged has ever appeared: and that no French writer has ever ventured to do justice to Villeneuve. It may be added that Villeneuve, in a letter to Decrès, written about August 10, (quoted by Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, vol. v. p. 442), expresses his distrust of a single line of battle, as a superannuated system, ("une tactique navale surannée"), and as exactly the formation which his enemies would wish him to adopt.

confidence, feeling that the issue depended on an arm greater than that of flesh, he retired to his cabin, to pen one last prayer to the Ruler of all battles, the only Giver of victory. Nor does the history of the world present a more sublime and touching instance of love for one's country and disregard for one's self. "May the Great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory. And may no misconduct in any one tarnish it. And may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me; and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen."

He soon returned to the quarterdeck. But, as they neared the enemy, the anxiety of his friends became as great as his own, and was concentrated on a different object; on his safety. The Victory was leading her line, and, from her position, would necessarily bear the brunt of the enemy's fire; while his own conspicuous dress, the breast of his coat being covered with his well-won stars, might even serve to make him an especial mark for shot. What everyone felt, no one liked to say to him; but at last Blackwood, in whose breast fear for his beloved chief outweighed all other considerations, ventured to point out to him the inestimable value of his own life, and to beg him to shift his flag into the Euryalus, that so, being himself clear of the battle, he might be better able to see what was going on, and to give his orders accordingly. This had at all times been a common practice in the French fleets; but Nelson had no great opinion of the use of fresh signals in the middle of an action, and placed far more value on the necessity of setting a good example to his followers. Blackwood could not but admit the force of this latter argument, and then limited himself to urging him to allow

two or three of the ships in his rear to pass the Victory and lead her into action. Nelson did at last give a verbal consent to the *Téméraire* passing him, and sent Blackwood to Captain Harvey to order him to do so; but when Blackwood returned to the Victory he found Nelson setting every sail so as to render it impossible for the *Téméraire* to obey the order, and the flagship maintained her pride of place, leading her column to the charge and going right before a light wind from W.N.W. It was now half-past eleven, and Blackwood was still walking with his commander on the poop, when Nelson asked him if he did not think there was still a signal wanting? Blackwood replied that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about, and to vie with each other which should get first into action. He had scarcely uttered the words when Nelson ordered the signal-lieutenant, Mr. Pasco, to telegraph—"England expects every man will do his duty."\* On land, before a battle, generals have often harangued their troops with great effect, or, riding along their front, by their visible presence and gestures have animated those whom their voice could not reach. An admiral can be seen and heard only by his own crew; but no spirit-stirring harangue, nor martial bearing of a well-tried chief ever excited such enthusiasm among his troops as Nelson's last signal, which was seen at once to be prompted by no studied artifice, but to express the genuine feelings that animated his own breast, and which, as the only source of great deeds, he wished also to inspire into all around him. It was received with a cheer throughout the fleet. "Now," said Nelson, "I can do no more; we must trust to the Great Disposer of all events, and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty."

\* "The Victory made the general telegraphic signal, 'England expects every man will do his duty,' which, being told to the ship's company, was answered with three cheers, and returned by the Dreadnought on our star-board beam."—*Log of Polyphemus*.

The signal was hauled down, and that for close action hoisted in its stead. The Victory, still leading her line, moved steadily on, but not quite in a straight direction.\* Nelson had already intimated to one or two of his officers an idea which he entertained of making a feint of attacking the enemy's van, in order to perplex their movements, and to prevent their leading ships from endeavouring to succour their rear. And now, as the gallant ship bore on, she hauled out to port for a short space of time, yet keeping her starboard and lee studding-sails set, to show to those behind her that her movement was merely a feint, and that her real aim was still the enemy's centre. But by this time she had got within reach of their guns, and the slanting direction thus taken by her exposed her to a raking fire from several of the French ships. As soon as Nelson saw that their shot passed over him, he sent Blackwood and Captain Prowse of the Sirius, who was also on board, to their ships, desiring them on their way to tell the different Captains that he depended on their exertions; and that, if by acting on his plan, they should find it impracticable to get into action early, they might follow any line they chose as long as it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. Blackwood shook his hand, saying he hoped to come back soon and find him well, and in possession of his twenty prizes. And now, for the first time, though still cheerful, he gave utterance to the foreboding which occupied his mind. "God bless you, Blackwood," he replied, "I shall never speak to you again."

The Victory pressed on; but, though leading her column, she was not to have the honour of firing the first shot. The leeward line was nearer to the enemy, and the Royal Sovereign, Collingwood's flagship, was by far the fastest ship in her division. She steered straight for the largest ship in front of her, the Spanish Santa Anna, 112,

\* See a memorandum communicated by Sir E. Codrington of the Orion to Sir H. Nicolas,—'Despatches,' vii. 154.

and Admiral Alava awaited her attack with calmness, not firing a single shot at her till her bows came under his stern. He had soon reason to repent his forbearance. As the British ship passed slowly by, she poured into the gallant but unskilful Spaniard her whole larboard broadside, every gun of which was double-shotted, and that one fire almost disabled her antagonist. Some minutes elapsed before any of her followers supported her, and some minutes more before the weather column was similarly engaged. Nelson had watched his friend's course, and pointed it out to Hardy. "See how that noble fellow, Collingwood, takes his ship into action!" While Collingwood, knowing the feelings of his old comrade and commander, had remarked to his own Captain, "Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!" Nelson thought too of another and a less fortunate officer, for he had earnestly desired Sir Robert Calder to delay his return to England till this day had been won; and, he added, "How glad would poor Sir Robert Calder be to be among us! Your friend Durham, Hardy, was the wisest man among them." For Captain Durham had refused to go home, and, though earnestly entreated by Sir Robert to accompany him as a witness on his trial, had stayed on purpose to bear his part in the battle. Yet at this moment Nelson had enough to engage his thoughts in the situation of his own ship; for the antagonists upon whom he was bearing down did not imitate the forbearance of the *Santa Anna*, but from the first moment that it was ascertained that the *Victory* was within shot, every ship that could get a gun to bear on her opened on her a well-aimed and unremitting fire. Soon her rigging was cut to pieces, and many of her crew were struck down; but she never fired a gun: and the Admiral and all his officers were diligently scanning the enemy's line for the flagship of the French Commander-in-chief, which Nelson desired to single out for his own antagonist. M. Villeneuve, however, had hoisted no

colours, and Nelson was left to conjecture. Right in front of him was his old opponent, the huge *Santissima Trinidad*, and from some indications, which escaped all but his own intuitive sagacity, he conceived the French Admiral to be just astern of her, as in fact he was; and his ship, the *Bucentaure*, 80, was one of those which was unceasingly firing upon the *Victory*. She drew nearer: Nelson's secretary was killed while speaking to Hardy, and another shot passed between the captain and Nelson himself, scattering around splinters, one of which tore the buckle from Hardy's shoe, and bruised his foot. The two officers looked anxiously at one another, each fearing his friend was hurt. Nelson smiled. "This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long." The breeze was light, and the *Victory's* advance in consequence slow, though she had every sail set; and before she reached the enemy's line she had lost fifty men killed and wounded. At last, however, when she had been exposed for full a quarter of an hour to the concentrated fire of the greater part of the enemy's van, she did reach it;\* and Hardy reported to the Admiral that it was impossible to pass through it without running on board of one of their ships. Nelson left the choice to him; and, as the *Bucentaure* was moving forward, Hardy decided to pass under her stern, and steered straight for the *Redoutable* in the second line.

In such an advance, which necessarily exposed the *Victory* to being severely cut up before she could be in a

\* There has been some dispute as to the time when the battle commenced; the *Victory's* log says that she opened her fire at 12.4. James, trusting to the log of the *Spartiate* (which, however, is admitted to have been kept by a watch which was above half an hour too fast), fixes the firing of the first gun at a minute before one. The plan of the battle, which was kindly lent to the author by Vice-Admiral Sir H. Bruce, who was himself in the battle, represents the *Victory* as passing under the stern of the *Bucentaure* at twenty minutes after noon. At all events it is clear that the *Victory* had been engaged for nearly an hour and a quarter when Nelson was wounded, as the same log, which fixes 12.4 for the opening of the fire, states "about 1.15 Lord Nelson was wounded in the shoulder."

position to retaliate, Nelson had probably, like other great commanders, calculated on the moral effect which so intrepid a proceeding would have upon the enemy. And he was not deceived. Villeneuve subsequently confessed that, as it came up, the advance of the whole column struck him as irresistible; and that the conduct of the three leading ships, the *Victory*, the *Téméraire*, and *Neptune* was what he could have formed no notion of.\* But he was yet to learn that the *Victory's* real power corresponded to her majestic bearing, as, at a few minutes after twelve, she passed under the stern of the French flagship, fired a carronade loaded with a 68-pound shot and five hundred musket-balls into her cabin-window, and followed it up with every gun of her larboard broadside. Every gun was double-shotted, many had even three balls, and, by the subsequent report of her own officers, that single assault reduced the *Bucentaure* to a state little short of defenceless helplessness. Twenty of her guns were dismounted by it; four hundred of her crew were struck down. Her starboard broadside the conquering British ship poured into the foe on her opposite side, the *Redoutable*; and a minute or two later she ran on board of her, and continued to pour her starboard guns into her, while her larboard battery still played on the *Bucentaure*, and on the huge *Santissima Trinidad*. The *Redoutable* at once closed her lower-deck ports to avoid being boarded, and made but little reply with her heavy guns; but her tops were filled with musketry, with brass cohorns loaded with langridge, and with hand-grenades, all of which were showered with most destructive effect on the *Victory's* decks. The battle was at its height; the irresistible advance of our leading ships had thrown the enemy's line into utter confusion; those which followed, availing themselves of Nelson's permission to take any course which

\* See Blackwood's letter to his wife, quoted by Sir H. Nicolas.—'Despatches,' vii. 224.



would bear them most quickly alongside an antagonist, had broken that line in several places; and almost every British ship was hotly engaged, when, about an hour after the Victory had run foul of the Redoubtable, a fatal musket-ball from the Frenchman's mizen top struck Nelson on the shoulder. He was walking rapidly up and down the quarterdeck with Hardy; and that officer, who was slightly in front of him, was just turning round, when he saw some sailors raising him from the deck. "They have done for me at last, Hardy," said Nelson. "I hope not," replied the Captain. "Yes, my backbone is shot through." The men bore him down to the cockpit: yet even in that moment of agony the hero's thoughts were not of himself, but of his ship and of his men. And as he passed along in the sailors' arms, he sent a message to Hardy to replace the tiller ropes that had been shot away; and covered his own face and the stars on the breast of his coat with his handkerchief, that the knowledge of his disaster might not dishearten the crew. When he reached the cockpit, already crowded with patients, the sufferers themselves begged the surgeon to leave them and to attend at once to their beloved chief; but it was soon discovered that, as he had himself judged, the hurt was mortal. His sufferings were great, and were increased by the exertions of his crew, as every broadside which the Victory fired shook the ship, and, as he himself expressed it, "distracted his poor brain." From the necessity of firing on the Redoubtable she was presently relieved by her surrender, though the French ship was fought with great gallantry; indeed, with such audacious resolution that her crew even showed an intention at one time of boarding the Victory. A few minutes after the Admiral had fallen, so many of the men on the upper deck of the Victory had also been struck down, while their comrades who were unhurt were carrying them below, that M. Lucas, the Captain of the Redoubtable, flattering himself that her loss of men had been

heavier in number than it proved, conceived the idea that she might perhaps be carried by a sudden attack, and actually assembled his boarders to make the attempt: But the moment that his design was perceived by the Victory's officers a strong party of sailors and marines rushed up from below, who swept down the hardy Frenchmen with their well-aimed musketry; and almost at the same instant the *Téméraire* came up on the other side of the Redoubtable, and added to the destruction with her heavy guns. Still the French crew held out, and it was not till more than half of them had fallen, and till their ship had been more than once set on fire, apparently by her own hand-grenades, that they hauled down her colours, about a quarter of an hour after Nelson had received his wound.

For an hour and a half more, till three o'clock, the conflict raged with uninterrupted vehemence, though long before that time victory had unmistakably declared for our side: Of the progress of this greatest of naval battles it is impossible to give a detailed account that would render exact justice to the services of the different ships which contributed to its glorious results; since, from the way in which it was fought, and from the noble manner in which the captains in general acted up, not merely to the letter, but to the spirit of Nelson's instructions, looking not so much to their own individual credit as to the advantage of their country, and, when they had subdued an antagonist, not stopping to take possession of her, but passing on in search of another foe, or of some comrade who might need assistance, it continually happened that the ship to which an enemy actually struck was not that whose prowess had reduced her to that necessity. Few indeed of our men, on this eventful day, failed to do their duty, even in the large sense which their great leader attached to that holy word. The enemy, too, French and Spaniards alike, fought as they had never fought before. In spite of the tremendous damage inflicted on the *Santa Antia* by the

first broadside of the Royal Sovereign, Admiral Alava, himself desperately wounded, resisted till his ship had lost all her masts, and her starboard side was nearly beaten in. Then at last, after a close conflict of more than two hours, he hauled down his colours. His wound was at first believed to be mortal ; but he recovered, and, having exchanged his naval profession for military service, by a singular fortune was present also at most of Wellington's triumphs in the Peninsula, and at the great land victory which terminated the war ; though then Spain was no longer subservient to France, but an ally of England, which, having on this day destroyed her fleet, afterwards furnished a general as invincible on land as Nelson himself was by sea, to rescue her people from grasping tyranny, and to lead her armies to victory. The French flagship had struck before the Santa Anna, almost wholly disabled by Nelson's single broadside. She had her doom sealed a few minutes afterwards by the Neptune and Conqueror, whose joint fire carried away all her masts, and to the latter of which she surrendered. Others too from time to time hauled down their colours ; as each did so, the crew of the Victory cheered, and, amid his sufferings, every cheer illumined the face of the dying hero with a smile of joy. Yet those ships that were still unsubdued continued their gallant struggle ; and the necessity for keeping a ceaseless watch upon all their movements detained Hardy for a long time on deck, though Nelson, by repeated messages, was imploring a visit from him. When at last, after a space of more than an hour, the Captain was able to obey his summons, he could announce to him that at least twelve of the enemy were captured ; and that, though others of them which were as yet unattacked were bearing down upon the Victory, he had called some of our fresh ships to her support, and was confident of beating these new antagonists. Jealous, even to the last, of the honour of his country's flag, " I hope," said Nelson, " none of our

ships have struck." Hardy replied that there was no fear of that. Then Nelson spoke of himself. "I am going fast, Hardy : it will all be over with me soon." And sent affectionate messages to his friends at home. With a heart full of grief, to which as yet he had no time to give way, Hardy wrung his hand, and returned on deck, from which he could be spared but for the briefest space ; since, in fact, from the moment when the Admiral fell, the real command of the fleet was in his hands. And, as he had just reported to Nelson, the van of the enemy had come round to support the centre, and were opening a heavy fire on the Victory. But Hardy's summons to his comrades had been made in time. The flagship was gallantly supported by the Neptune, the Spartiate, the Colossus, the Mars, the African, by Nelson's own old favourite the Agamemnon, and even by the Royal Sovereign, who, having being rendered wholly unmanageable by the loss of two of her masts, was now in tow of the Euryalus, but was still able to take an effective share in the battle, whenever the frigate could place her in a position to bring her guns to bear on a worthy object.

Meanwhile Nelson's sufferings increased ; they became so acute that "he could almost wish" he said, "that he were dead." But the love of life, and the desire to complete his victory himself, mastered all other feelings. His most constant exclamation was an expression of gratitude to God for having enabled him to do his duty. And he wished that he had not left the deck, but that he could still see with his own eyes what was going on. He began to be very anxious for the fleet to anchor ; and when, after another lapse of nearly an hour, Hardy once more returned to his bedside, he bade him make a signal to that effect. Hardy suggested that he supposed Admiral Collingwood would now take the direction of affairs. "Not while I live, I hope," said Nelson : "no : do you anchor, Hardy." But he was getting rapidly weaker, and felt the pains of

death coming over him. Few of the enemy's ships still maintained their fire, but several were attempting to flee, whose escape it seemed possible to cut off. The *Principe de Asturias*, on board of which Admiral Gravina, the Spanish Commander-in-chief, had been mortally wounded an hour or two before, was making off with one or two other Spanish ships; and Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, with four French ships, which had scarcely fired a shot, also began to retreat. The cannonade on both sides had almost ceased, when the comparative silence was broken by an event somewhat singular to the most striking incident at the battle of the Nile, and which had since been repeated at Copenhagen. All the French ships had, like the *Redoutable*, musketry, cohorns, and grenades in their tops, and more than one of them, like that ship, had been in danger of being burnt by her own weapons. The flames, however, so kindled, had been extinguished in all but one, *L'Achille*,\* 74; but her fire-engine had been destroyed by our shot, and presently a broadside from the *Prince* brought down her blazing foremast, whose wreck, becoming entangled among her boats, soon communicated the flames to the hull. Those of our ships which were near at once desisted from further hostilities against her, and exerted themselves to save the crew. It was a service of danger, for her guns were still loaded; and, though no one now thought of serving them, they went off as the fire reached them, and killed some men in our boats who were trying to rescue the French sailors. Between four and five o'clock she blew up, and shortly afterwards all sound of warfare ceased. Those who were still watching round Nelson's couch reported to him that the battle was over, and the victory complete; that, as it was believed, the

\* There was an *Achille* and a *Swiftsure* in each fleet, and no less than three *Neptunes*; one English, one French, and one Spanish. The *Swiftsure* in the French fleet had been taken from us, as related before. The English *Achille* had been captured by us from the French.

twenty prizes on which he had reckoned, were in our possession.\* But by this time he had become so weak as hardly to be conscious of the receipt of this intelligence, on which, above all things, his heart had been most set. He was fast losing all sensation, all power of articulating. Once or twice yet a few broken words were heard from his dying lips, still showing the passion that had ruled his whole life. "I thank God I have done my duty." "I have done my duty, and I praise God for it." And at half-past four he yielded up his spirit to that God to whom, even in the extremity of his agony, he was solely intent in expressing his submission and his gratitude.

Thus died by the most glorious death ever yet vouchsafed to a human being, one of the greatest men that has adorned the history of this country or of the world. It is not only that in him great political sagacity was united with the most perfect military genius, to which were added the most daring courage and the most ready and unfailing presence of mind; nor that with these qualities, which compel our admiration, were beautifully blended those softer attributes that attract affection, an almost feminine gentleness of disposition, an ever sympathising and ever watchful kindness and humanity, a generosity of

\* Collingwood's despatch, written a fortnight after the battle, and published in the 'Gazette' of November 27, states that "twenty sail of the line are taken or destroyed." Three days afterwards a note from Captain Blackwood, published in the 'Gazette' of November 30, reduced the number to nineteen, stating that the original estimate of twenty included the French *Argonaute*, which was safe in Cadiz. But, in addition to those left actually in our possession or destroyed by fire or wreck, two more, the *Santa Anna* and *Algesiras* had struck, though they escaped into Cadiz afterwards. Four more were taken (as will be seen in the next chapter) by Sir R. Strachan; and, though the French ships *Neptune*, *Algesiras*, *Héros*, *Argonaute*, and *Pluto* also got into Cadiz and were refitted, they were never able to escape from that harbour, but lay there till they were captured by the Spaniards in 1808 (v. *infra*, p. 389). Four of the frigates, which also took refuge first in Cadiz, did escape in the following summer; but of the whole number of line-of-battle ships that composed the French portion of the fleet, not one ever again fired a gun or even put to sea for a moment.

feeling which showed itself in acts as well as in words towards enemies as towards friends ; but that these admirable talents and endowments were at all times under the guidance of the most eminent public virtue, of the most unsullied honour, the most absolute unselfishness, the purest patriotism, the most sublime devotion to the cause of his king and country without the most transitory alloy of a single petty, or interested, or unworthy feeling.

It may perhaps be questionable whether of the great generals, whose triumphs at the head of armies have filled the world with their renown, any has been endowed with a higher genius for war. Naval warfare, waged as it is on one universal plain, the sea presenting neither cities to be taken, nor rivers to be crossed, nor mountains to be traversed, is no doubt simpler than warfare by land, which in a great degree turns on the address with which such obstacles are eluded, overcome, or at times even converted to one's own advantage. But the more the absence of all distinctive features from the scene of warlike operations tends to place hostile commanders on a level, the more marvellous is that genius, which, in spite of the apparent equality to which such circumstances seem to reduce all combatants, contrived to show so marked a superiority over every other commander in every country who has at any time led a fleet into battle. In the history of nations, Nelson alone stands at the head of his profession without a rival.

His comrades, those whom he had thus led to victory, and from whom he was thus suddenly taken, were for a while almost unmanned by his loss. Nor was he grieved for by them alone. His death was felt by the whole nation as a calamity, in the presence of which the unparalleled greatness of his victory, and the security which it gave to the country, were almost disregarded. It struck with real sorrow alike the wise and the unreflecting. It was the only event in his long career which had power to

disturb the high-souled equanimity of Pitt.\* And the agitation with which the great Minister received the news was reflected in the demeanour of the whole people. Even those who had never known, who had never seen him, spoke of him, lamented him as though they had lost a personal friend. It was an unselfish sorrow, for there was nothing more left for him to do. His last achievement had been so complete that there were no more hostile fleets left to conquer, no more dangers from which he could deliver his country. Men grieved rather for themselves, that tears, and panegyrics, and posthumous honours were all that they could now bestow ; and that he was not spared to receive the universal homage, and gratitude and affection with which they would have greeted his return.† Yet, in some respects, his friends could hardly grieve, nor perhaps would he himself have wished a different fate. Such a death, in the moment of a great and signal victory, had been a frequent topic of his conver-

\* Lord Malmesbury (Diary, vol. iv. pp. 349-50) gives a striking description of the general feeling of the nation at the news of Nelson's death. He says that, "Not one individual felt joy at this victory, so well-timed and so complete, but first had an instinctive feeling of sorrow." When describing the illumination in honour of the victory, he continues : "I never saw so little public joy ; every common person in the streets speaking *first* of their sorrow for *him*, and *then* of the victory." And the same volume records Pitt's statement of his own feelings, "That he had been called up at various hours in his eventful life by the arrival of news of various hues ; but that, whether good or bad, he could always lay his head on his pillow and go to sleep again. On this occasion, however, the great event announced brought with it so much to weep over, as well as to rejoice at, that he could not calm his thoughts ; but at length got up, though it was three o'clock in the morning."

† It may be added that his reputation has not been confined to his countrymen, neither in his own time nor at the present day. The Spanish Governor of Andalusia in 1805, the Marquis of Solana, wrote to Collingwood of his death as an event that had plunged himself in sorrow. Villeneuve paid a noble tribute, not only to his services and genius as a commander, but to the degree in which his example inspired his followers ; saying that to any other nation his loss would have been irreparable, but that in the British fleet every captain was a Nelson. And the most recent French historian of that period speaks of "the illustrious Nelson, whose loss was more grievous to us than that of an army would have been" (*plus regrettable pour eux qu'une armée*).—*Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, c. xxii.



sation, and was believed by many to be the secret desire of his heart. For his own glory, which, next to the advantage of his country, was ever his dearest object, who shall say that it would have been an unwise wish? The Roman satirist thought it the only thing wanting to the perfect felicity of the great conqueror who had saved his country from Gallic violence, that he should have died at the moment of the consummation of his last and greatest triumph. For the self-seeking ferocious heathen such an end would have been too happy, too honorable. It was reserved for the Christian patriot; and it may have been the purpose of Providence, which certainly intends the example of great men to serve as an incentive to future generations, to prevent the lustre of Nelson's renown from being in even the least degree dimmed by the rust of inaction to which his own exploits and the cost\* at which they had been achieved, must for the future have condemned him, by thus taking him from us in all the splendour of his living glory.

What his bereaved country could do in recognition of his matchless, priceless services to her, was done liberally and eagerly. A pension was given to his widow; a grant of public money to his sisters; an earldom to his brother, with a large sum to be expended in the purchase of an estate which should be for ever annexed to the title. His name was to be kept in the sight of men by more than one national monument; and, in imitation of the honours paid to the dust of the mighty victor of Blenheim and Ramilies, a public funeral was to consign his mutilated body to the holy keeping of the great national Cathedral of St. Paul. At the beginning of the new year it took place, and never before had been beheld a ceremony so impressive both in

\* He had not only lost one eye, but his wound in the head, received at the Nile, and his incessant use of the telescope while at sea, had so impaired the other, that Dr. Beatty considered that, if his life had been preserved, he must soon have become totally blind.—Beatty, 'Narrative,' p. 88.

its outward pomp and in the feelings it awakened in the hearts of all who witnessed it. For three days all that was mortal of Nelson lay in state at Greenwich, among the memorials of the profession he had loved, the pictures and trophies of victories won by their chiefs, and many a living witness of his own early prowess. From thence he was removed to the Admiralty, and on the 9th of January was borne in solemn state to St. Paul's. The heir of the throne with the other sons of the King, the ministers of the Crown, the nobles of the land, stood around the coffin as it was lowered into the grave. But the most interesting part of the long procession were the sailors from the Victory; the men who, under his own immediate command, had had so large a share in gaining his last fatal triumph; and more touching than even the composed, dignified sorrow of princes and nobles, was the untaught, unrestrained grief of those hardy warriors: men inured to scenes of anguish and death, who had seen their comrades fall around them undismayed, who had themselves borne wounds and mutilation with actual cheerfulness,\* but who now, with tears and audible sobs, testified their deeper sense of this great and irreparable loss, and tore his flag to pieces, as it was lowered into the grave, to preserve, till death, some memorial of him whom every one of them looked upon not more as the greatest of heroes than as the best of friends.

Monuments were raised to Nelson's memory by public vote and private subscription: but the fittest memorial of all was felt to be the ship in which he last conquered, in which he died; and, as soon as the cessation of the war allowed her to be withdrawn from active service, she was put into thorough repair, to be preserved at Portsmouth, as long as her timbers would hold together, that the sight

\* A seaman on board the *Leviathan* sang "Rule Britannia" all the time that the surgeon was taking off his arm that had been shattered by a round-shot.—*Journal of the Leviathan*, quoted in 'Nelson's Despatches,' vii. 186.

of her might keep alive, in successive generations of sailors, the recollection of his greatness, and stimulate them, as far as might be, to follow in his steps. That intention is amply realised. In one respect, indeed, time has deprived her of the pre-eminence she once enjoyed : marine architecture has of late received such improvements, that she is no longer the largest or fastest ship in the British Navy. Huge two-deckers lie by her side, which would steam round her ; frigates which exceed her both in tonnage, and in the weight of metal of their broadsides ; but still the ship on which all eyes are fixed in Portsmouth harbour is Nelson's Victory ; and within her everything is arranged with judicious taste, to mark why she is thus preserved. The spot on which the great Admiral fell, the narrow cockpit in which he breathed forth his spirit, are indicated by carefully renewed inscriptions. One picture of him is in the chief cabin. Another, in the quarters of the men, traced with no cunning art, but by the reverent affection of one of themselves, is gazed on by them, and shown to strangers as the most faithful portrait of him who, dying before one of them was born, is nevertheless still the chief object of their pride and fondness. Over the wheel his last signal, in letters of gold, still reminds them of their country's right to their dutiful service. And on each anniversary of his triumphant death, the masts of the good ship are dressed with flags and crowned with garlands ; not only celebrating the dead, but encouraging the living by the testimony they afford, that, as no other nation in the world has ever produced such citizens as Britain, so none has ever honoured its heroes with such affectionate and enduring reverence.

While these universal honours were paid to the illustrious dead, rewards were also showered with no sparing hand on survivors. Collingwood was made a peer ; medals were bestowed on the captains ; and extensive promotions were distributed among the officers of inferior

rank. While, as a compliment to the whole navy, the rank of Admiral of the Red was now at last granted to the service by a special Gazette, and several veterans of the fleet were advanced to it.\*

The real fruits of the victory of Trafalgar were so solid that no casualty could deprive England of the benefit of them. The trophies were mostly lost to her. A few minutes before Nelson died, Hardy sent one of his lieutenants to Collingwood, with the intelligence that he was wounded; and, as soon as he had breathed his last, he went himself to announce his death to the new Commander-in-chief, and to report to him also the earnest wish that Nelson had expressed that the fleet should anchor. "To anchor," Collingwood replied, was "the last thing that he should have thought of." But the result proved that Nelson's judgment was the more correct. During the battle the two fleets had drawn towards the land so rapidly, that, when it terminated, they were not above eight miles

\* This, in the Gazette which announces it, is called a "restoration of the rank of Admiral of the Red," and since that time it has often been spoken of as such; and, on the supposition that there *must* have been such a rank at some previous date, different reasons have been suggested why it ceased to exist. Indeed, before Trafalgar, as may be seen from Schomberg's 'Naval Chronology,' the question had often been raised why there was no such rank; and its absence had generally been explained by a statement that it was abolished on account of the capture of Sir G. Ayscough in 1666, as related in vol. i. p. 93. But Ayscough was probably only a vice-admiral; certainly was not an Admiral of the Red. Nor is it by any means clear that the modern methodical arrangement of the Red, White, and Blue squadrons had been introduced quite so early. In no record whatever, now to be found at the Admiralty, is there a mention of any officer at any former time as Admiral of the Red: and the probability appears to be that, when the division was first made, the full admirals were divided into only white and blue; the red flag, or highest rank, being reserved for the Lord High Admiral, or for the Board, when that office was, as most commonly the case, in commission. It may be remarked that Collingwood, who was highly gratified by the compliment thus paid to the navy, and who was better versed than most of his contemporaries in the history of his profession, did not, apparently, look upon it as a *restoration*; his words are, "The *adding* a red flag at the main to the navy on this occasion is a proud thing."—Letter to Lady C., Dec. 6, 1805.

from Trafalgar. The prizes were all shattered and disabled beyond the precedent of any former battle, and many of our own ships were in a state but little better. The wind too began to freshen and there appeared imminent danger of the whole fleet being wrecked on the very scene of its triumph. As night came on, Collingwood began to change his mind. The Royal Sovereign was so wholly disabled, that he quitted her for the *Euryalus*, which still had her in tow; and from the frigate, at nine o'clock, he signalled to the fleet to prepare to anchor. But four precious hours had been lost, and many of the British ships had had their cables so injured in the battle by the enemy's shot, that they were unable to obey the signal. One or two did anchor, and the ease in which they passed the night, and the safety in which they rode out the subsequent gale, afforded abundant proof how much injury might have been avoided, had Collingwood decided, at an earlier hour, to adopt Nelson's dying suggestion.

The next day the weather became worse: but not sufficiently bad to prevent our ships from exerting themselves to secure the prizes. It was soon seen that all could not be saved. The *Redoubtable*, the especial prize of the *Victory*, went down with a portion of her crew, and a few of the English sailors who had been sent on board. The *Fougueux* drifted on the rocks, and went to pieces. The *Bucentaure* was lost in the same manner; but her own surviving men, and the English sailors who had been put on board as a prize-crew, were saved by one of the French frigates, which had escaped from the battle. The *Algésiras*, another of the captured ships, was in such danger of a similar fate, that the English prize-crew, which amounted only to fifty men, were obliged to release their prisoners to aid in saving the ship. The liberated Frenchmen did save the ship; but first they overpowered their captors and repossessed themselves of the vessel, and, after great exertions, got her into Cadiz. Their act was hardly in

accordance with the strict rules of war ; but they in some degree earned an indulgent construction of it by releasing the English seamen on their arrival in port, and returning them to our fleet under a flag of truce.

Commodore Cosmao Kerjulien, in *Le Pluton*, had escaped into Cadiz ; and, on the 23rd, seeing the distress of the British fleet and its prizes, who were still beating about in sight of the harbour's mouth, he collected four more ships of the line, which had avoided capture, with all the frigates, and, in spite of the gale which was still raging; gallantly stood out to sea, in the hope of being able to make some impression on our crippled ships, or, at least, to recover some of those which we had taken. Collingwood, on seeing his approach, called a few of his soundest ships around him ; cast off the prizes, and, placing them in the rear, presented a line of battle which the brave Frenchman could not venture to encounter. Our ships were far too much crippled to be able to pursue him when he retreated ; but, though secure from molestation by us, and though at first in some degree successful, since his frigates recovered the *Santa Anna* and the *Neptuno*, he had in the end but little reason to plume himself on the result of his bold step. Three of his five ships, the *Indomptable*, 80, with the Spanish *Rayo*, 100, and *San Francisco de Asis*, 74, were driven on shore and wrecked ; and the recovery of two prizes, which had been almost battered to pieces, was but a poor set off against the loss of three comparatively fresh ships.

In the ensuing night, another of the captured ships the *Monarca* went down ; one or two more were driven on the rocks and dashed to pieces ; and the weather continued so rough that the next day Collingwood voluntarily destroyed some of the remaining prizes, lest the endeavour to save them should endanger his own ships. He scuttled and sank even the *Santissima Trinidad*, which as the largest ship in the world, he would, no doubt, gladly have

taken home as a trophy. At last, only four of the prizes, the French *Swiftsure*, and the Spanish *Bahama*, *San Ildefonso*, and *San Juan Nepomuceno* remained to be conducted to England; and even they were so utterly disabled that they could never be refitted for our service.

The enemies who had been defeated, felt that they had lost no honour; that they had made every exertion for victory that courage and self-devotion could make against superior skill under the guidance of irresistible genius. And, therefore, the moment that the contest was over, both sides put away all rancour, and behaved to one another with a generosity worthy of the purest days of ancient chivalry. Collingwood finding the number of wounded men among his prisoners far too great to receive proper attention on board the British ship, despatched a flag of truce to the Spanish Governor of Andalusia, with an offer to send them on shore to their own hospitals. The Governor, while thankfully accepting the kindness, offered to receive our wounded also into the same hospitals, urging upon the Admiral that the Spanish honour was worthy of this generous confidence; while the French frigates which came out to receive the wounded Spaniards, brought out the British sailors who had been saved from the wrecked prizes, as they had already restored the prize-crew of the *Algesiras*. The French nation, from whom every detail of the battle, and even in a great degree the very result was concealed, could not of course appreciate a humanity of which they were never informed; but on the Spaniards Collingwood's generosity, and the sense of having been in some extent able to requite it, produced a deep impression, which probably contributed in no small degree to the confidence with which, three years afterwards, they implored our assistance, and to the cordiality with which, in spite of the obstinacy and stupidity of their rulers, they welcomed and co-operated with our armies.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

1805—1806.

Alteration in the character of the war — Sir R. Strachan captures M. Dumanoir and his squadron — Sir J. Duckworth pursues M. Villaumez — Abandons the chase — Crosses to the Leeward Islands — Destroys the squadron of M. Lessigues — Eventual fate of M. Villaumez — Loss of the Calcutta — Of the Blanche — Ville de Milan takes the Cleopatra, and both are taken by the Leander — The San Fiorenzo takes the Psyche — The Phoenix takes the Didon — Troubridge, in the Blenheim, beats off M. Linois — His appointment to the East India station — Coolness between him and Sir. E. Pellew — He is transferred to the Cape of Good Hope — Is lost in a storm — Capture of M. Linois — Capture of a squadron of frigates by Sir T. Hood — Capture of Le Rhin by the Mars — Sir Sidney Smith's operations off Naples — Operations of Captain Hoste on the Calabrian Coast — Exploits of Lord Cochrane in the Pallas — La Cannonière beats off the Tremendous — Reduction of the Cape of Good Hope — Expeditions to South America.

From the day of Trafalgar, the character of the war was altered. Napoleon laboured diligently to conceal from his own subjects the blow which he had received. With a pettiness of mind absolutely unexampled in a great ruler, and an audacity of falsehood equally unprecedented, he compelled Godoy, the worthless Prime Minister of Spain, to insert in the Madrid Gazette a list of our fleet, which exaggerated its numbers by including some ships which were not in the battle and others which were not in existence\* which described several of them as sunk in the action, or wrecked on the coast; and summed up the whole account by affirming our fleet to be destroyed. And then he caused this apparently official statement to be copied into a French newspaper, with a forged report purporting to have been addressed by Collingwood to the

\* For instance, it names the Duke of York, 90; the Leger, 80; the Relampuyo, 74; though our navy never contained such vessels.



Admiralty, and fully confirming it. But he did not attempt to deceive himself. From this time forth he gave up all hope of rivalling us at sea ; and began to discountenance maritime enterprises almost as zealously as for the last four years he had laboured to foster an inclination for them among his people.\* From this time forth we have no more battles between fleets to relate ; for, indeed, it was only once or twice that anything worthy to be called a fleet left a French harbour again till the end of the war. Some small squadrons of five or six ships were at sea when the great battle took place, and in the six months which followed, two such fell in with British squadrons of similar force, and were utterly defeated. Their disasters, as was natural, increased Napoleon's disinclination to measure his strength with our line-of-battle ships ; and, for the last eight years of the war, he continued his naval operations almost entirely to such as could be performed by frigates.

The first squadron-action, to which allusion has been made above, may be called an offshoot of Trafalgar. It has been mentioned that Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, with his own flagship, the *Formidable*, 80, and three seventy-fours, the *Montblanc*, *Scipion*, and *Duguay Trouin*, made good their retreat from the destruction that fell upon the bulk of M. Villeneuve's fleet. Dumanoir's first idea was to repair to Toulon ; but Admiral Louis's squadron, though

\* " Il commençait à désespérer de la marine Française. . . . À partir de ce jour Napoleon pensa moins à sa marine, et voulait que tout le monde y pensât moins aussi."—Thiers, ' Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire,' c. xxii. One very significant indication of the impression made on Napoleon's own mind may be seen in the curious fact that the 11th volume of his correspondence which professes to contain all his letters of the period during which he received intelligence of the destruction of his fleet, does not contain a single letter referring to it. One is given desiring Decrès to send him the details ; but not one after he received them. It is not unfair to infer, as some must have been written, that they are only suppressed because his expressions of grief and despair were so vehement, that even at this distance of time his relative is unwilling to reveal how deeply he felt the downfall of this portion of his ambitious projects.

unhappily it had not received Blackwood's express in time to share in the great battle, now did good service in barring the Straits against M. Dumanoir. On learning that Louis was hovering about Tangier, the French Admiral abandoned all idea of entering the Mediterranean and, after cruising about for a day or two, decided on bearing up for Rochefort. It was the most unfortunate direction which he could have chosen ; for the Rochefort squadron had been at sea ever since M. Villeneuve had endeavoured to join it at the beginning of September, and had done so much mischief to our trade that more than one British squadron was sent to the Bay of Biscay in search of it. And among them was a force consisting of five sail of the line and two frigates under Commodore Sir Richard Strachan.\* M. Dumanoir was at no great distance from Cape Finisterre, when, on the afternoon of the 2nd of November, he fell in with Captain Baker, in the 42-gun frigate Phoenix. He chased her, and she had no resource but flight ; but she had not fled long before she fell in with the British Commodore, and gave him notice of the approach of the enemy, whom Captain Baker imagined to be M. Allemand with a portion of the Rochefort squadron. It was well that Sir Richard thus got intelligence of the vicinity of an antagonist before he fell in with him ; since, when first the Phoenix joined him, his ships were widely scattered. The Namur was a long way astern, and the Bellona was still further behind ; in fact, she had parted company with the squadron, and did not rejoin it again for some time. As soon as Captain Baker had hailed the *Cæsar* and imparted his information,

\* Sir Richard's squadron consisted of—

80	<i>Cæsar</i>	..	..	..	Captain Sir R. Strachan.
	<i>Hero</i>	..	..	..	Captain Hon. A. Gardner.
74	<i>Namur</i>	..	..	..	Captain Halsted.
	<i>Courageux</i>	..	..	..	Captain Lee.
	<i>Bellona</i>	..	..	..	Captain Patie.

FRIGATES.

86	<i>Santa Margarita</i>	..	..	Captain Rathbone.
82	<i>Æolus</i> ..	..	..	Captain Lord W. Fitzroy.

Strachan despatched him to look for the ships astern, and summon them to the scene of action; and he had hardly done so, when he saw the French squadron in the horizon. It was nearly midnight; but the moon was bright, so that he was able to ascertain the direction in which they were steering. They were so resolved to avoid an action, if possible, that *Le Formidable*, which was a heavy sailer, even threw some of her guns overboard, to increase her speed: but their motions had been too accurately observed for them to have a chance of escaping; and, though Sir Richard lay to for a short time to allow the rest of his force to come up, soon after daybreak he again got sight of them. He had both his frigates with him, and in the afternoon he was rejoined by the *Phoenix*, who was bringing with her not only the *Namur*, but another frigate, the *Revolutionnaire*, 38, Captain H. Hotham; and frigates and all joined in the chase of the enemy. The pursuit lasted throughout the night of the 3rd; at daybreak on the 4th, the *Phoenix* and the *Santa Margarita* had got near enough to *Le Scipion*, the rearmost French ship, to open their fire on her; and presently M. Duma-noir, perceiving an action to be inevitable, brought his squadron together in a compact line of battle, and shortened sail to receive our attack. He saw no reason to dread the result of the conflict, since there was as yet only three of our line-of-battle ships to contend with; for the *Namur* was still some miles astern, and he had not reckoned on the frigates proving as formidable as he soon found them. The *Cæsar* was leading the British line; the *Duguay Trouin* was the foremost French ship, *Le Formidable* being the second. For her, as the flagship, Sir Richard bade the *Cæsar* be steered; and, soon after midday, he engaged her with great vigour, while his two other line-of-battle ships attacked *Le Mont Blanc* and *Le Scipion* in the rear. The action was gallantly maintained on both sides; *Le Duguay Trouin*, finding herself without an antagonist, luffed up to support her Admiral, but in her

gallant attempt received more injury than she inflicted. At the end of two hours, *Le Formidable* was greatly crippled; but the *Cæsar* too had received such damage in her rigging as to be for a time almost equally unmanageable: and it could not be said that any decisive advantage had been gained, when, shortly afterwards, the *Namur* came up to take her share in the action. The two squadrons being now on an equality, or, rather, the superiority being now on our side, since the two frigates *Phoenix* and *Revolutionnaire* were far from idle, the contest was soon terminated. *Le Formidable* and *Le Scipion* being both almost dismasted, were the first to strike; the other two tried to escape, but were soon obliged to follow their example. We had not gained a bloodless victory, for we had to lament above a hundred and thirty men killed and wounded; but the loss of the French was nearly six times as great: *Dumanoir* himself being among those who were severely hurt. And the action altogether was an important addition to the great victory which preceded it, since the whole of the ships now captured were in a state to do their captors good service, and were all added to the British navy.

The other actions between squadrons of some magnitude, to which allusion has been made, did not, indeed, take place till the beginning of the subsequent year, 1806; but all the circumstances which led to it took place in 1805, so that it may be most fitly spoken of here as belonging to the first period of the war, before *Trafalgar* changed its character. Nelson had hoped that Sir J. Duckworth would join him as third in command; but the *Superb*, in which he had hoisted his flag, stood in need of extensive repairs, and it was not till the 15th of November that he reached Cadiz. Collingwood, who, as a reward for his gallant conduct at *Trafalgar*, had been already appointed Commander-in-chief on the Mediterranean station, with a commission as extensive and as full as that which had been given to Nelson, had gone with the main

body of the fleet into the Mediterranean, leaving Rear-Admiral Louis with four sail of the line and two frigates to blockade Cadiz, where the few ships of the enemy which had escaped from Trafalgar were still lying. Of this squadron, Duckworth, on his arrival, naturally took the command; but he had not exercised it long, when a sloop brought word that a French squadron of five sail of the line, three frigates, and a few smaller vessels, had been seen between Madeira and Teneriffe. On the receipt of this intelligence, Collingwood decided that the ships in Cadiz, after the terrible lesson which they had so lately received, were not likely to be in a hurry to quit their harbour; and, with judicious resolution, ventured to raise the blockade, and despatched Duckworth in search of this more active foe. Though he was not aware of it, two French squadrons, of very nearly the same force, were at that time cruising in the same latitudes: the one, under Rear-Admiral Villaumez, consisting of an 80-gun ship and five 74's; the other, under Vice-Admiral Lessigues, of one ship of 130 guns, two of 84, and two of 74. Duckworth's force consisted of the *Canopus*, 80, four 74's, the *Superb*, *Spencer*, *Donegal*, and *Powerful*, one 64, the *Agamemnon*, and two frigates; so that he was about equal, but in no degree superior to either of the hostile squadrons. Eager for battle, he made the best of his way to Madeira: from thence he steered to Teneriffe; and, having failed to gain at either island any intelligence of the enemy, he was on his way back to Cadiz, when, on the 23rd of December, he met with our frigate *Arethusa*, which, with a few trading-vessels under her escort, had been chased a day or two before by M. Lessigues. According to her report the French Admiral was nearly on the line to Cadiz which Duckworth was taking, so that he had no need to alter his course to find him; and the next day but one he came in sight of a French squadron, at no very great distance from Madeira. It was, however, not M. Lessigues, but M. Villaumez who was thus met with. But Duckworth,

neither suspecting the existence of two enemy's squadrons of a force so similar, nor much caring what squadron it might be, so long as it was an enemy, at once gave chase ; while the French fled to the southward with every sail that their ships could set. We have seen that, as a general rule, the French ships outsailed the English : on this occasion it unfortunately happened that our ships were not so much bad as most unequal sailers ; and a stern chase after a flying enemy brought out this inequality in a very striking manner. All that day, and a great part of the next, they fled and we pursued unremittingly ; at last the *Superb*, Duckworth's flagship, appeared to have gained a little on the rearmost ships of the French ; but she had gained far more on her own consorts. The *Spencer*, 74, Captain Stopford, was, indeed, only four or five miles behind her ; but the next to her, the *Agamemnon*, the fastest ship, as, twelve years before, Nelson had boasted, in the whole fleet, was hardly in sight ; and the remainder were hardly in sight of her : the *Canopus* and *Donegal* were not less than forty-five miles from the *Superb*. It was clear that if the Admiral waited till they came up with him, the enemy must escape. It was equally clear that if he should push on, without so waiting, and, after a few hours more should succeed in getting alongside the enemy, he would have to encounter their whole force with one, or, at the most, two supporters ; and could hardly hope to escape being overpowered before the rest of his squadron could possibly come up. Under these circumstances he discontinued the chase, but it had drawn him so far to the southward, that he was now within the influence of the N.E. trade-wind ; and as he was in want of water, he stretched across to the Leeward Islands, where Fortune rewarded his perseverance with a prize which he little expected. One of the frigates he sent to England with the intelligence of his movements. One of his line-of-battle ships, the *Powerful*, 74, he detached to the East Indies to warn Sir Edward Pellew, who had lately been

appointed Commander-in-chief on that station, of the approach of the squadron of M. Villaumez, which he had been chasing, and to reinforce him for an encounter with it; and with the rest, on the 12th of January, he reached Barbadoes.

From that island he proceeded to St. Christopher's, where he watered and refitted his ships; and he was preparing to return to Cadiz, when, on the 1st of January, he received intelligence that a French squadron was at St. Domingo. He at once changed his intended course, and went in pursuit of them. He had recently been joined by the Northumberland, 74, and the Atlas of the same force, so that his whole force consisted now of seven sail of the line and a frigate; with these, on the morning of the 6th, he came in sight of St. Domingo, and, as he approached, saw the enemy at anchor in the roads of the city of the same name. It was the squadron of M. Lessigues, composed of L'Imperial, 130, the flagship, two 84-gun ships, two 74's, and two frigates and a corvette. As soon as they perceived the British squadron, they slipped their cables and made all sail to escape; but Duckworth shaped his course so as to head them, and when they saw that a battle was inevitable, they prepared for it with great resolution. Duckworth signalled to his followers that the head of the French line was to be the object of attack, and set the example by bearing down on the leading ship, L'Alexandre, 84, and engaging her at close quarters. Superior in weight of metal as the French ship was, she was unable long to support the attack of the Superb, and retreated, leaving the Admiral at leisure to go to the assistance of the Northumberland, who was greatly in need of his aid; for the antagonist which had fallen to her lot was L'Imperial, 130, the finest ship in the whole French navy; and the treatment which the Bellerophon had received from L'Orient at the Nile, was sufficient proof how little, under the most skilful guidance, a seventy-four could resist a French three-decker. The arrival of

the *Superb*, however, restored the balance, and, though the superior weight of the Frenchman's guns was heavily felt by both our ships, their greater rapidity of fire and accuracy of aim far surpassed the general effect of her broadsides; and they began to look forward to her speedy capture, when Rear-Admiral Louis brought up the *Canopus* to join in the conflict. She poured in so terrible a cannonade, that *L'Imperial*, which had hitherto been fought with undaunted courage, now sought safety in flight towards the land: she did not, however, find it; she had already lost her mainmast and mizenmast, and was so completely disabled that, instead of being able to bring up under the shelter of the land, she drove on shore, where, after the action, she was burnt by the *Acasta* frigate, which Sir John sent in for that purpose. The *Diomède*, 84, shared the fate of her Admiral; the other three ships were taken, and nothing escaped but the frigates and the corvette, which had fled at the beginning of the engagement. For the size of the contending squadrons, few more creditable actions are recorded in these pages. In the number of their ships, indeed, the French were inferior; but, when the number and calibre of their guns, and the strength of their crews \* is taken into the calculation, it cannot be denied that they were the stronger of the two; and so conscious were they themselves that this was the case, that the *Moniteur* in its account of the action, sought to render its result excusable by exaggerating the British squadron into a fleet of "nine sail of the line and several frigates," and diminishing the number of the French line-of-battle ships to four. It added that two of our ships were wrecked, two more dismasted, and that the rest of the fleet had been most severely handled.

M. Villaumez, though he escaped from Duckworth,

\* The number of the French crews, for which head-money was paid, gave 4260 men and boys, above 500 more than manned the English ships. Our loss was 74 killed and 264 wounded. The French killed and wounded amounted to about 1500.



had, in the end, but little better fortune than M. Lessigues. Continuing his course to the southward, in March, 1806, he reached the Cape of Good Hope, ignorant that at the beginning of the year that important settlement had again fallen into our hands; and losing one of his finest frigates, the *Volontaire*, 46, which sailed blindly into the harbour, and was taken by a British squadron which was there lying at anchor. Retracing his steps, he then crossed the Atlantic towards the Leeward Isles; and, after taking a few small trading-vessels, and making one or two ineffectual attacks upon our West Indian settlements, at the beginning of July he took his station off the Bahamas, to watch for a large fleet of British merchantmen, which, as he had learnt, was preparing to sail for England. They escaped him; but still he cruised about for some weeks, till, in the middle of August, his squadron was dispersed and severely crippled by a gale: one ship of the line, *L'Impetueux*, was driven on the American coast and destroyed by the *Melampus*; two others, *Le Patriote* and *L'Eole*, took refuge in the Chesapeake, where they were so closely blockaded by a British squadron, that her own crew destroyed *L'Eole*. The remaining frigate, *La Valeureuse*, was treated in the same manner; and finally only three ships of the whole squadron ever regained their own country.

In actions with single ships the French were scarcely more successful this year than in engagements with fleets and squadrons. One British 50-gun ship, the *Calcutta*, Captain Woodruff, sacrificing herself to the safety of her convoy, which she secured, was indeed taken by the Rochefort squadron; and a smaller force, consisting of the *Topaze* frigate, two corvettes, and a brig, captured our 44-gun frigate *Blanche*. Captain Mudge, who commanded her, had already distinguished himself in smaller vessels, and he now fought the *Blanche* with great gallantry against superior odds, not surrendering her till she had six feet of

water in her hold, and till she was so completely disabled that her new masters thought her fit for nothing but the flames, and burnt her the same day. The only other instance in which a British ship fell into the hands of the French gave the victors but a short-lived triumph, and resulted in their own defeat and captivity. In February Sir Robert Laurie, in the *Cleopatra*, 38, was cruising in the neighbourhood of the Bahamas, when he descried a French frigate, to which, though visibly larger than his own, he at once gave chase. It was the *Ville de Milan*, 46, commanded by Captain Renaud, who, being charged with despatches for home, was directed to avoid any engagement with an enemy, and who consequently, in obedience to this order, made all sail to avoid the *Cleopatra*. The British frigate, however, proved the faster, and after a chase of a day and night overtook her antagonist and brought her to action. Sir Robert was less fortunate than his gallantry deserved. Though the *Ville de Milan* was the larger and stronger ship, the superiority in the *Cleopatra*'s sailing tended in some degree to neutralise these advantages, and she had inflicted so much more injury on the Frenchman than she had received, that she began to entertain confident hopes of victory, when the tables were suddenly turned. A chance-shot struck the *Cleopatra*'s wheel, and jammed its broken spokes against the deck in such a manner that it became immovable, while at the same time the rudder itself was choked by splinters. This accident, for such it may fairly be called, of course rendered the British frigate unmanageable, and M. Renaud, taking prompt and skilful advantage of her helpless condition, placed his ship in a position where she was no longer exposed to the broadsides which had done her so much damage; and relying on the superior number of his crew, which almost doubled that of the British sailors, he endeavoured to carry his antagonist by boarding. Still, however the *Cleopatra* made a gallant resistance, and repelled

her assailants ; but now the musketeers, of whom the French frigate had a strong force, began to pour a ceaseless stream of fire upon her decks, and, when nearly sixty of the British crew had fallen, a second attempt met with better success : the French made good their footing on board our ship, and hauled down her colours. So severely had both ships suffered, that the *Cleopatra* had hardly struck when two of her masts went over the side ; and in the course of the night the same misfortune befell the *Ville de Milan*. M. Renaud had been killed by the last shot fired from the *Cleopatra*. His first-lieutenant refitted the two ships as well as he could in the open sea, and was proceeding on his way to France, when, only four days after the action, he fell in with the *Leander*, the same ship that had borne so gallant a part in the battle of the Nile, and had been so unfortunate afterwards. She had been restored to us by the Russians when they took Corfu, where she was lying, and was now commanded by Captain Talbot, who at once bore down to the attack. At first the two frigates closed up to support one another ; but presently they separated, apparently hoping to secure the escape of one : if such was their object, it was quickly baffled. The *Leander* soon overtook the *Cleopatra*, which at once surrendered ; and, as there were enough of her old sailors left on board to manage her, Captain Talbot did not stop to send her a prize-crew, but at once gave chase to the *Ville de Milan*, which, as soon as he reached her, also struck her colours without firing a shot. In fact, their recent conflict had so crippled both frigates that neither of them was in a condition to resist a fresh assailant ; and thus this, the only instance during the year of a French frigate capturing an English one single-handed, proved her own destruction. Another frigate action deserves to be recorded, not for the greatness of the achievement, since the English ship, which was the conqueror, was by far the more

powerful, but for the gallantry of the defence made by the French captain. He was the same M. Bergeret who has more than once been mentioned in these pages, not only as one of the bravest and most skilful, but as one of the most generous and chivalrously-minded officers in his country's service; and his ship was the *Psyche*, a 36-gun frigate, of rather light armament, her main-deck-guns being only 12-pounders, when he fell in with the British Captain Lambert in the 42-gun frigate *San Fiorenzo*, whose main-deck-guns were half as heavy again as those of the *Psyche*. For above three hours did Captain Bergeret maintain this unequal combat, not surrendering till a full half of his crew lay killed or wounded on his deck.

One hard-fought frigate-action, to which allusion has already been made, was not altogether unconnected with the movements of the great fleets which, two months later, met at Trafalgar. *La Didon*, a splendid French frigate of forty-six guns, under the command of Captain Milius, was at the beginning of August cruising about the south-western extremities of the Bay of Biscay in search of the Rochefort squadron, to which she was bearing intelligence of the movements of Villeneuve and his fleet, when she fell in with the English 40-gun frigate, *Æolus*, which, for no very sufficient reason,\* forbore to attack her. She, in obedience to strict orders, agreed with the *Æolus* in shunning a conflict; but three days later she was less fortunate. On the 10th of August she was descried by another British frigate, smaller than herself, though in a trifling degree more powerful than the *Æolus*, the *Phoenix*, 42, commanded by Captain Baker, who at once bore down upon her, and brought her to action. Captain Milius had learnt from the captain of an American trader that an

\* The reason alleged by her captain, Lord W. Fitzroy, was that he was the bearer of a letter from Admiral Cornwallis to Sir R. Calder, of whose fleet he was in search. But British captains, in general, could hardly consider such a commission as an adequate reason for avoiding a contest with an enemy of nearly equal force.

English 20-gun ship was in his neighbourhood, and apparently he mistook the Phoenix for that vessel till she came close to him. Still, though he saw that he had been mistaken, it was plain that the English frigate was considerably inferior to his own : in fact the Phoenix was above two hundred tons smaller than the Didon ; the weight of her broadside fell short of that of her foe by a hundred and twenty pounds, and the French crew outnumbered the British sailors by more than eighty men. He therefore would not stoop to a retreat, which would have looked like a flight, but backed his topsails, and fearlessly awaited the attack which was descending upon him. In spite of his inferiority of force, the chief anxiety of Captain Baker was lest the enemy, when she found that she was getting the worst of the action, should escape ; and, to prevent such a misfortune, he resolved to pass her and get to leeward of her before he opened his fire. The French Captain perceived, and endeavoured to baffle this design, manœuvring his vessel with great skill, and pouring heavy raking broadsides into the Phoenix as she came up. As was too generally the case, the English frigate proved far inferior in speed and handiness to the French ship ; nevertheless, at last Captain Baker's skill and perseverance were crowned with success, and, having brought his ship into the position in which he desired to place her, he opened his own fire within pistolshot-distance with prodigious effect. A terrible conflict ensued, which lasted for some time, both ships moving onward on the same tack, with a light wind, and each trying every manœuvre to enable her to rake her antagonist. Each gained her object for a moment ; but the Phoenix succeeded best, and inflicted the heaviest damage on her foe. At one moment the two ships came in contact, and the French endeavoured to board ; but, superior as they were in numbers, they were repulsed. On both sides the marines kept up a heavy fire of musketry ; but, as usual, the British marksmen were more rapid and more true in their aim, and, when

at last the two ships again engaged broadside to broadside, this superiority was still more conspicuous with the great guns. The battle had lasted nearly three hours, when the Frenchman's foremast fell ; and on this the *Phoenix*, which had slackened her fire for the purpose of repairing the damage which she had received in her rigging, renewed it with greater vigour than ever, and in a quarter of an hour more compelled *La Didon* to strike. The victor, making for Gibraltar with his prize, very nearly fell into the clutches of *M. Villeneuve* on his way, as has already been related, to Cadiz. However, by a mixture of skill and good fortune, he escaped this danger, and then, changing his course and steering to the northward, conducted both ships in safety to Plymouth.

Brilliant as his achievement was, it may be said to have been outdone, almost on the same day, by *Troubridge*, though no trophy won from an enemy rewarded his exertions. That great officer was now a Rear-Admiral, and was proceeding with a single 74, the *Blenheim*, to India, where the Admiralty intended that he should divide the station with *Sir Edward Pellew*. A small flotilla of Indiamen had also been entrusted to his escort ; and he and his charge were about half-way between the Cape of Good Hope and the Bay of Bengal when he fell in with *M. Linois*, who with the *Marengo*, 80, and the *Belle Poule*, 40, was still cruising in those seas, on the watch for any unprotected merchantmen that might cross his path. They at once bore down upon him, and, as far as ships went, no contest could be more unequal : for the *Marengo* was a splendid vessel of her class, nearly, if not quite, equal in force to a British first-rate, and the *Belle Poule* was one of the finest frigates that had ever left a French harbour ; while the *Blenheim*, as was too fatally proved a couple of years afterwards, was one of the worst ships in our navy, and in a heavy sea, such as she was now in, rolled so much that she could not venture to open

her lower-deck ports. The difference, however, between Troubridge and M. Linois was greater than even the disparity between their ships. The Frenchmen, more anxious for gain than for glory, began the action by attacking the merchantmen, and, if the *Blenheim* would have let them, would apparently have been content with picking up as many of them as they could master, without molesting the ship of war; but Troubridge was not a man to abandon a stick of the convoy entrusted to his protection, and soon forced the French to turn their attention from the *Indiamen* to himself. Confined as the *Blenheim* was to the use of her maindeck-guns, she was little more than a match for the *Belle Poule*; and, as her enemies closed with her, one on each side, it seemed as if their fire must speedily crush her. But Troubridge was accustomed to contend with and to vanquish odds; and, ill, as his ship sailed, he handled her so skilfully, while his men, inspired by his dauntless example, plied the guns which they could use with such energy that in a short time both their assailants were glad to retreat, having each of them suffered far more severely than the British ship. The next day M. Linois, who was still hovering round the British squadron, showed a momentary inclination to renew the combat; but Troubridge drew up the *Indiamen* in line of battle, and setting every sail that the *Blenheim* could carry displayed such a manifest willingness to accept the challenge that the French Admiral thought better of it, and in the evening drew off and made all sail to the southward, while Troubridge conducted his whole squadron in safety to Madras.

His arrival there produced a quarrel between himself and an almost equally distinguished officer, Sir E. Pellew; arising from no fault of either, but from the mismanagement of the Admiralty at home. The blunder committed by the Board on this occasion may, perhaps, be in some degree explained by the frequent changes that had of late taken place in its composition: but they fail to

render it excusable, or to lighten the feeling of deep regret at the melancholy result to which it probably led. It has been already mentioned that Pellew had been appointed Commander-in-chief on the Indian station : yet a few months afterwards, with a strange forgetfulness, the Board, without recalling his commission, gave Troubridge another, which trenched upon Pellew's, purporting to divide the station into two portions, of which Sir Edward was to retain only the westernmost. In his knowledge of the rules of the service, Pellew was surpassed by no member of his profession ; and when Troubridge arrived, and announced to him the command which had been conferred on himself, he very properly refused to recognise it, till he should receive a regular letter of recall and a fresh commission. The case was so clear, that Troubridge, though naturally annoyed at having been sent on a fool's errand, was easily brought to acknowledge that the view which his brother officer took of the position was correct, and submitted to Pellew's authority till fresh orders could be received from England. And Pellew, with great disinterestedness, did what he could to heal his disappointment, by giving him a separate squadron to cruise on that portion of the station where prizes were most likely to be made. Still it may be feared that a soreness of feeling remained behind, and that it led to the great disaster which ensued.

When the letters of the two Admirals reached England, they found a fresh Board presiding at the Admiralty ; the fourth within two years : and though, with official prejudice, the new rulers were disposed at first to uphold the act of their predecessors, and to condemn Sir Edward, on examination they found that the law was unquestionably on his side. They accordingly recalled Troubridge, appointing him instead to the station at the Cape of Good Hope ; and thither, at the beginning of 1807, he prepared to go. The *Blenheim*, as has been already said, was a



bad ship when she quitted England two years before, and her subsequent service had completely worn her out. In the opinion of every one who saw her she was now hardly safe in any sea, or in any weather, and utterly unfit to cross the stormy ocean that lies between Ceylon and the Cape. Pellew therefore entreated Troubridge to shift his flag, and offered him any ship in his fleet. But Troubridge had been used to contend with dangers, and his confidence in his own resources for encountering them was boundless. He remembered how he had refitted the Culloden before St. Vincent; how he had saved her after the Nile; and he had devised a plan which he believed would enable even the Blenheim in his hands to reach the Cape, if not England, in safety. He was also, as he scarcely concealed, unwilling to accept what might be deemed a favour from one whom, in spite of his generous behaviour, he still looked on in some degree as a rival. Under the influence of these combined feelings, in January, 1807, he set sail for his new command, in company with the *Java*, a heavy Dutch built frigate, which had been recently captured, and the *Harrier* sloop, commanded by his own son. He was never seen again. In the middle of March the *Harrier* reached the Cape, and reported that on the 5th of February she had been separated from her consorts in a gale, and had seen them both making signals of distress without being able to succour them. Both had evidently gone down. And thus had perished one who, since the death of Nelson, had been perhaps the foremost officer in the whole British navy: one who had been the companion of many of that hero's hardest labours and most glorious achievements; who, beyond all others of his comrades, enjoyed his confidence and affection; and who was pronounced by Lord St. Vincent to have been second only to him in the art of inspiring his own untiring energy and dauntless spirit into all who were fortunate enough to be placed under his command.

His repulse by the *Blenheim* was not the last disaster which befell *M. Linois*. A month afterwards he was reinforced by another frigate, *L'Atalante*, but she was soon afterwards wrecked on the African shore; and being thus reduced again to his squadron of two ships, he at the end of the year bent his course homewards. He had passed *St. Helena*, and was approaching the *Azores* when he fell in with that most fortunate officer, *Sir J. B. Warren*. *Sir John's* flag (he was now a Vice-Admiral) was flying in the *Foudroyant*, 80, and he had with him the *London*, 98, *Sir H. Neale*, the *Courageux*, 74, Captain *Bassett*, and the *Amazon*, 38, Captain *W. Parker*. Such a force the Frenchman could not hope to repel; but it must be recorded to his honour that both the *Marengo* and the *Belle Poule* met their danger with a bold face; the *Marengo* gallantly maintaining a running fight with the *London* till the *Foudroyant* got near enough to take her share in the action, when *M. Linois* surrendered; and the *Belle Poule* replying with equal energy, though not with equal effect, to the guns of the *Amazon*, till the approach of our line-of-battle ships compelled her also to strike. That, however, their presence was unfortunate for the *Amazon*, as robbing her of the credit of vanquishing her antagonist single-handed, may be inferred from the fact that while the frigates were left to themselves the advantage was wholly on the side of our vessel, which had only lost eight men, four of whom had received but temporary injury, while the killed and wounded in the *Belle Poule* amounted to thirty. It is worth while also to point out, as a proof of the invariable superiority in force of French ships to English vessels of the same rating, which has been already mentioned, that the *Marengo*, though only an 80-gun ship, was larger in tonnage, and manned with a more numerous crew than the British first-rate, the *London*; was almost equal to her in weight of metal, and was in

every point far superior to the ship which was nominally of the same force, the 80-gun *Foudroyant*.

One action between squadrons which took place in 1806 was remarkable, not so much from the capture of four out of five French ships, overpowered as they were by superior numbers, as from the circumstance that, though the French vessels, as has been already stated, were usually better sailers than our own, in this instance British line-of-battle ships chased and overtook French frigates. In September Sir Samuel Hood was cruising off Rochefort with one first-rate, the *Windsor Castle*, 98, and five seventy-fours, when he fell in with a squadron of five French frigates of the largest class: one of forty-six guns, three of forty-four, and one of forty-two. The last-mentioned, the smallest of the company, escaped, but all the rest were taken; and the speed of the *Mars*, Captain Larkin, was again, as in 1798,\* especially remarkable. *L'Infatigable* tried to escape by holding a different course from her consorts, but the *Mars* caught and captured her; and then returning pursued *La Gloire*, which was making off in a different direction, and took her likewise. The superiority of our force diminished the glory of our own gallant officers, but in no degree alleviated the injury which the loss of four of the finest frigates in their service was to the French.

A month or two before, the *Mars* had had another opportunity of exhibiting her remarkable qualities as a sailer. Captain Keats, with the rank of Commodore, at that time had the squadron in the Bay of Biscay in which the *Mars* was commanded by Captain Oliver, when, on the evening of the 27th of July he perceived a squadron of four large French frigates making for Rochefort. They fled, and he and his comrades at once gave chase. But the *Mars* so outsailed the rest of her own squadron that during the night they completely lost sight of her; and by noon the

\* See *ante*, p. 69.

next day she had come up with *Le Rhin*, 44, which was slightly astern of her consorts. For a moment the French Commodore halted and formed his other three frigates into line of battle, as if intending to support her; but presently his heart failed him, and he made off, leaving *Le Rhin* to her fate. She continued her flight, with every sail set, though the weather was very bad, with violent squalls of wind, rain, and hail; and even threw overboard some of her guns and stores to increase her speed: but by six o'clock she was overtaken, and on receiving a single shot she struck her colours. The other frigates were still in sight; but the badness of the weather, which would not allow Captain Oliver to remove his prisoners, prevented him also from pursuing them; and they reached their harbour in safety; one of them, the *Thémis*, being the same vessel which subsequently escaped from Sir S. Hood.

Collingwood, with the *Trafalgar* fleet, had resumed the blockade of Cadiz, congratulating himself on the knowledge that the Spaniards were equipping a formidable fleet, since he hoped that it was a sign that they intended to come out and fight another battle; but they came not. And in the spring he was forced to detach a powerful squadron to the south of Italy, to retard the progress which the French were making in the conquest of the whole Peninsula. He placed it under Sir Sidney Smith, now a Rear-Admiral: but he had little expectation that that officer would be able to prevent the French from making themselves masters of the mainland; and the highest hopes that he really ventured to entertain were that perhaps Sicily might be saved. The commission was well suited to Sir Sidney's energy and peculiar talents; and he applied himself to his task with characteristic zeal. But before he arrived at Naples, the King had already fled in an English ship to Palermo; Masséna had occupied the Italian capital, and had proclaimed Joseph Buonaparte

king; and the first sight that greeted Sir Sidney's eyes was a general illumination in honour of that event. The force under his command, consisting of four ships of the line, besides frigates, would have enabled him to spoil the merrymaking of the invaders by an effective cannonade; but, with a generous consideration for the inhabitants, such as the enemy never showed throughout this war, he abstained from an attack from which the citizens must have suffered equally with the French; and, though he had no doubt but that he could have driven Masséna and his troops to take refuge in the fortresses, he reflected that, by so doing, he should be leaving the beautiful city and its peaceful inhabitants a prey to anarchy and rapine; so he would not fire a gun against the city, and Collingwood approved of his generosity. The only place that was still unsubdued by the French was Gaeta, which the Prince of Hesse-Philipstadt was holding for the King with a small garrison; and here, therefore, Sir Sidney exerted his chief efforts, supplying the fortress not only with provisions and ammunition, but with some of the Excellent's guns, and leaving Captain Richardson in the *Juno*, 32, to co-operate with the Prince in any operations which he might consider advisable. Aided by the frigate's boats, the garrison accordingly made more than one successful sally, destroying the French batteries which caused them the greatest annoyance; but it was plain that a place like Gaeta could not long be maintained against such a general as Masséna, when the whole of the surrounding districts were in the hands of the enemy; and when, at the beginning of July, the Prince himself was disabled by a severe wound, the garrison lost heart, and surrendered.

In the more southern districts, Sir Sidney even ventured for a time on aggressive operations; though he spared the French in Naples itself, he saw no reason for showing mercy to their garrison in the island of Capri, which, from its command of the communication along the coast, was

an object of considerable military importance. He therefore sent Captain Rowley in the *Eagle*, 74, with two Neapolitan gunboats, a flotilla of which had been placed under his orders by the King, to drive the enemy from the shore by a cannonade: the marines and brigade of seamen from the squadron landed, stormed the heights and the works which crowned them; Captain Stannus of the Marines slew the French commandant in single combat. In little more than an hour the enemy capitulated, and the island fell into our hands, without costing us any heavier loss than that of two men killed and eleven wounded. Sir Sidney bestowed great praise on the Neapolitan crews which had shared in the enterprise; which they also earned from him in an attack on a town at Massa opposite to the island, where the French had accumulated some artillery and stores which they had intended for the garrison at Capri, but which two of the Neapolitan gunboats brought off in triumph.

Nor did the Rear-Admiral confine his exertions to merely naval operations; but, having had a great share in persuading Sir John Stuart to undertake the invasion of Calabria, he accompanied the army along the coast, and received the warm acknowledgments of the General for the success of his measures for supplying the troops and tending the wounded. Another squadron, under Captain Hoste of the *Amphion*, had likewise a considerable share in the successful operations which were the consequence of the battle of Maida; in the fall of Cotrone and Scylla, which last place we succeeded in holding even after the French usurper had established his hold upon every other part of Ferdinand's continental dominions.

After Lord Cochrane's achievements in the *Speedy*, it might have been expected that care would have been taken to enable him to repeat them on a more extended scale. Unfortunately he was a man of a fiery temper; and, as a Member of the House of Commons, espoused with the vehemence belonging to his character the principles of the

Opposition. It, perhaps, told still more against him with the authorities of the Admiralty, he was uncompromising in his exposure of whatever abuses he detected ; and no public department was more rife with such than the Admiralty. Offence, too, was taken even at the zeal with which he pushed the claims to promotion of those officers who had distinguished themselves under his command. And Lord St. Vincent, whose administrative judgment was far from corresponding to his professional skill, was weak enough to resent the language he at times held on such subjects as a personal affront, and to determine to punish him by stopping his own advancement. It was with great difficulty that he could be induced to promote him to post-rank, which had rarely, if ever, been more brilliantly earned : and when he was no longer able to withhold that step, he could not be prevailed upon to give him a ship fit for service. His successor, Lord Melville, however, had not only greater fairness of spirit and greater regard for his own reputation, but luckily was also a Scotchman, and would not leave the most gallant officer of his rank in the service, being also a countryman of his own, unemployed. He at once appointed Lord Cochrane to the command of the *Pallas*, 38, sending him to cruise off the Azores ; and the propriety of the appointment was soon abundantly justified by the prizes which the *Pallas* sent in one after another to our harbours. Her cruising ground lay in the exact road from the Spanish West Indian settlements to the mother country, and consequently, a most heterogeneous spoil, equally displaying the bigotry and wealth of Spain, rewarded the captors, and amused the good citizens of Plymouth when the prizes arrived in the Sound. One ship was freighted with diamonds ; others with dollars or ingots. One contained a number of bales marked on the outside as unsaleable, which on examination proved to be Papal Bulls, dispensations for eating meat on fast-days, and other ecclesiastical documents ; in the valuation of which, as described

in the endorsement, the crew of the Pallas so entirely coincided, that they threw them overboard. When the Pallas herself reached Plymouth, each of her mast-heads was decorated with a massive golden candlestick, part of a service of church-plate on its way from Mexico to some Spanish cathedral. The treasure on board the captured vessels were not all national property; and Cochrane's conduct, with respect to some which belonged to individuals, places his generosity in as pleasing a light as that in which his ceaseless triumphs exhibit his skill and bravery. One of the prizes, besides a vast amount of other treasure, contained the entire fortune of her captain and of the supercargo; and, on hearing of this circumstance, Lord Cochrane at once proposed to his men to restore to them four thousand dollars apiece. His officers and crew cheerfully consented; and the two Spaniards, instead of any longer lamenting their captivity, rather thought themselves fortunate in falling in with a conqueror capable of so splendid and rare a generosity.

These captures had been made without much difficulty or danger; but Lord Cochrane's preservation of his booty was attended with both, and his success in saving it displays in a singular manner the promptitude of his decision, and the endless variety of his resources. The Pallas, though a new ship, was very crank, very unsafe to carry much sail upon in a heavy sea; and, as she was on her way home in rough and hazy weather, she one day suddenly found herself at no great distance from three French line-of-battle ships in full chase of her. It was soon seen also that they were the better sailers, and were nearing her fast. Lord Cochrane therefore ordered all the hawsers in the ship to be got up to secure the masts, and then spread every possible stitch of canvas. The enemy, however, continued to gain on her; and in an hour or two had approached her within half a mile, but fortunately the sea was too heavy for them to be able to fire on her while under press of sail. Still it was clear that they would



soon get alongside of her, when she would be at once forced to surrender. No case ever appeared more hopeless. But Lord Cochrane would not abandon hope, and resolved to try a bold manœuvre, which he thought might still save him and his crew from revisiting a French prison, though it was a hazardous experiment in the heavy gale now blowing. He bade the men shorten all sail at the same instant; and, directly this was done, he put the helm hard up and wore the ship short round: she shook from stem to stern with the shock, but her masts stood; and, while her pursuers, taken by surprise by so unexpected and skilful a manœuvre, shot by her, and ran on several miles before they could shorten sail, the *Pallas* quickly made all sail again on the other tack, the hawsers still supporting the masts. By the time the French had got round to renew the chase, night came on. As soon as it was quite dark Lord Cochrane lowered overboard a ballasted cask with a lantern, and while the enemy was deceived by the light, kept the *Pallas* on her course with every sail set; and at daybreak had the satisfaction of finding that he had successfully eluded a force which he could not have resisted for a single moment.

After a cruise to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, productive of no results worth recording, the *Pallas* was sent to form part of a squadron with which Admiral Thornborough was cruising off the Isle of Aix; and, on a field so peculiarly suited to his talents, her Captain soon began to harass the French, as six years before he had harassed the Spaniards in the Mediterranean. Before quitting England he had, at his own expense, added to the *Pallas's* boats a double-banked galley, built after a pattern of his own, which proved, as he had expected, unrivalled in speed. With a picked crew of eighteen oarsmen, she became the terror of all the vessels on the coast; and many were seen to run ashore in preference to an encounter with her. With her aid the *Pallas* made a number of prizes; so many

indeed that, had not the crews generally escaped, she would have been unable to hold her prisoners. And in April she dropped down to the mouth of the Garonne, where some corvettes were reported to be lying. The only vessel of the kind which, on his arrival, her Captain was able to see, was anchored high up the river, in water too shallow to allow the Pallas to approach her, so he sent in all his boats to make a night attack on her. Fortune favoured the enterprise ; there was so thick a fog that the boats took the vessel by surprise, and found her to be La Tapageuse of fourteen guns ; but before the captors had got her down the river, three other corvettes, all far larger than the Tapageuse, were seen by the Pallas to be approaching from the open sea. Perhaps Lord Cochrane had never been in greater danger, for the boats had taken all his crew but forty men ; a number not sufficient to work the ship, much less to man the guns, if she should be attacked. However, he was not much troubled at his weakness, so long as he could conceal it from the enemy ; and, as full as ever of invention, he set his men to work to fasten up the furled sails with rope-yarns. Presently, when the corvettes drew near, he bade them cut them all at once and let the sails fall : and the three hostile vessels, the smallest of which was far more than a match for the Pallas in her existing state, judging from the rapidity with which the sails were unfurled that the frigate was worked by a crew not only strong in numbers but perfect in discipline, made off along the shore.

Their flight did not save them : the Pallas pursued them, firing her bow guns at them, which indeed were all that she was able to man. They never stopped to measure their strength with her ; but one after another ran on shore. One proved to be mounted with twenty-four guns, one with twenty-two, and the third with eighteen. They were all too much injured by running ashore to be brought off, so he fired into them till he had completed their de-

struction, after which he rejoined the Admiral with *La Tapageuse*, and with a loss to his own ship of only three men wounded. After this he worked up and down the coast for some weeks, the terror of every Frenchman at sea or on shore : sometimes cutting out well-laden traders ; sometimes reconnoitring the roads at Aix : sometimes even making descents on the coast, and destroying batteries and signal-posts which the French had erected in different places, to obtain a view of our cruisers while still at a distance. At last he provoked them into making an attempt to put a stop to his ravages ; and when, in the middle of May, the *Pallas* stood in to renew her examination of the ships in Aix roads, M. Allemand, the French Admiral, sent out *La Minerve*, a splendid 44-gun frigate, with three corvettes, to attack her. The guns of the *Pallas* were only twelve-pounders, those of the *Minerve* were eighteen-pounders ; but a difference such as this was not taken into consideration by Lord Cochrane. He was within shot too of some of the batteries on the isle of Aix, which opened their fire on him ; but nevertheless, when he perceived *La Minerve* coming out to invite a battle, he joyfully stood in to meet her, disabled two of the corvettes as he advanced, and then engaged the frigates as steadily as he could, consistently with the necessity of occasionally tacking to avoid the numerous shoals which lay around. In spite of the superiority of the enemy's metal, his fire was so much the more effective that, after an action of an hour, he saw that she was preparing to retreat, and to prevent this he ran the *Pallas* aboard of her ; but just as he did so *La Minerve* grounded on a shoal, and the concussion, as the two ships came in contact, was so great that the rigging of both was disabled by the shock. The guns of the *Pallas* too were driven back into their ports ; but still she kept up a tremendous fire, from which the whole of the French crew, except the Captain, a brave officer named Collet, sought refuge by fleeing below.

Lord Cochrane was full of hopes of carrying off *La Minerve* as his prize, when two more frigates were seen advancing out of the harbour to succour her. Instead of thinking of making a prize, he was compelled now to exert all his efforts to avoid becoming one; and luckily the *Kingfisher* sloop, commanded by Captain Seymour,\* being at no great distance, saw his peril, and, bearing down, took the *Pallas* in tow. The French frigates did not venture to pursue her into deep water; and soon afterwards she returned to England to repair the damages which she had sustained in two years of almost unequalled services.

While the *Pallas* was thus distinguishing herself, a namesake of hers fell into our hands under most creditable circumstances, which are the more worth recording because one of the principal actors was Commander Troubridge, the son of that great officer whose melancholy loss we have already mentioned by anticipation, but who was, at the time of the transaction, exercising the command which Pellew had allotted to him, with the *Harrier* sloop under his son's command as part of his squadron. She, with the *Greyhound* frigate, under Captain Elphinstone, was in the summer cruising off Macassar, when they saw at a distance four enemy's ships, which, by hoisting French colours, they contrived to approach and bring to action. The disparity of the odds was great; for one of the ships was the Dutch 36-gun frigate, *Pallas*; another was a 20-gun corvette; and the two others were fine merchantmen, both well armed and mounted. The corvette escaped by her superior sailing; but her three consorts were all taken. The *Harrier* chased her till Captain Elphinstone recalled her; but he bestowed the greatest praise on Captain Troubridge, who, while he himself was engaged with the *Pallas*, had almost completed the capture of the largest of the merchantmen, a

\* Now Admiral Sir G. Seymour.

vessel twice the size of his own, and was showing the greatest eagerness to bring the corvette to action, though she, too, was far more powerful than his own sloop.

While recording the successes of our own ships, we must not omit to do justice to the admirable combination of gallantry, skill, and good fortune by which a French Captain saved his ship when attacked by an antagonist whose superior force would have been a sufficient excuse for his making unresisting submission. M. Bourayne, as captain of the 40-gun frigate *Cannonière*, was cruising off the African coast, between the Cape and Port Natal, when he fell in with the British seventy-four, *Tremendous*, Captain Osborn, who, with the *Hindustan*, 50, was conveying a small flotilla of Indiamen to England. Leaving the *Hindustan* to take care of the merchant-vessels, Captain Osborn gave chase by himself to the French frigate; and, as her movements were hampered by the proximity of the shore, he after a time came sufficiently near to her to open a fire on her with his bow-guns, to which she replied with her sternchasers. As he drew nearer he was able to bring more of his guns to bear; but still the gallant Frenchman disdained to yield, and, handling his ship with admirable skill, was more than once able to direct his whole broadside against his pursuer's rigging. Still the heavier guns of the line-of-battle ship were producing a far greater effect than his: two of *La Cannonière's* masts were severely wounded, two of her anchors were shattered to pieces, one of her guns was dismounted, thirty of her men were killed and wounded, and the *Tremendous* was coming up with her so rapidly that it was apparent that a few more minutes would bring her alongside, when, of course, all further resistance must have been in vain. At this moment of despair Fortune came to the aid of the weaker side; a broadside of the frigate, probably the last which she would have been able to fire, brought down the foretopsail-yard of her antagonist, and did so much

injury to other parts of her rigging, that the Tremendous was compelled to lay by to refit. La Cannonière profited by the respite, thus fortunately obtained, to get to windward; and, before the British crew had repaired their damages, she had succeeded in this object, and, the contest having now resolved itself into a trial of speed between a two-decker and a frigate, she was soon out of danger. Few occurrences of the war afford a clearer proof that the sailors of France were inspired by the same brilliant courage that animated her soldiers, and that our repeated triumphs were won over no unworthy enemies, but were due to the equally vivacious and more resolute bravery of our men, and the unequalled skill with which that bravery was directed by our officers.

Allusion has already been made in this chapter to the recapture of the Cape of Good Hope, which, at the beginning of the year 1806, was effected by a combined expedition, in which the troops were commanded by Sir David Baird; the ships, three sixty-fours, a 50-gun ship, and two frigates, by Commodore Sir Home Popham: but though the squadron was of great service in covering the landing of the army, and though a brigade of sailors and marines was sent to serve on shore, yet the operations by which the Dutch were defeated were so entirely military that the mere mention of the success attained seems sufficient for the purposes of the present work. And for the same reason the expeditions to Buenos Ayres and Monte Video in which Sir Home, flushed with the success of the enterprise against the Cape, persuaded the General to concur, may in like manner be passed over with the bare mention of their having been undertaken: though a sailor may perhaps reflect, with some satisfaction, that the only part of those enterprises in which his service had a share was that which was successful; while it is in no respect mixed up in the disasters and disgraces which were subsequently incurred.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

1807—1808.

War with Turkey and Denmark—Russia invades the Principalities—Sir John Duckworth is sent to the Dardanelles—Loss of the *Ajax*—He passes them—Enormous artillery of the Turkish castles—Duckworth burns a Turkish squadron—Arrives off Constantinople—Opens a negotiation—Returns to the Archipelago—Is exposed to a heavier fire than before—Collingwood goes to the Dardanelles—Reconnoitres Toulon—The Treaty of Tilsit—We send an expedition against Copenhagen—We bombard the city—It capitulates, and we carry off the fleet—Retake the Danish Islands in the West Indies—Captain Brisbane takes Curaçoa—Sir Edward Pellew destroys the Dutch ships in the East Indies—The Spartan beats off the Hannibal—The boats of the *Galatea* cut out the *Lynx*—The *Hydra* cuts out three privateers on the coast of Catalonia—Napoleon invades Spain—The Spaniards capture the French fleets at Cadiz—M. Ganteaume sails to Corfu, and back to Toulon—Collingwood fails to meet with him—Sir James Saumarez goes to the Baltic as Commander-in-chief—The *Centaur* and *Implacable* join the Swedish fleet—The *Implacable* takes the *Sewolod*—She escapes; is recaptured and burnt—Rear-Admiral Kents succeeds in aiding the Spanish brigade to escape from the French service—The Russians take shelter in Rogeswick—From thence they escape to Cronstadt—Sir Charles Cotton compels the surrender of Admiral Siniavin and his fleet—The *Seahorse* takes the *Badere-Zaffer*—The *Amethyst* takes the *Thetis*—Exploits of the *Impérieuse*.

THE decisive influence of the victory of Trafalgar on the subsequent character of the war cannot be shown more conclusively than by the returns of the results of the war during the year of which we are about to speak; the first year in which that influence could have its full effect, since the hostile squadrons which came into contact with ours in the year immediately following that great achievement, had, for the most part, put to sea before it had been performed. The returns for 1807 state that no French

or Spanish line-of-battle ship or frigate was taken by us during the whole year; nor did we, on our part, lose any vessel of those classes. The engagements which took place between us and our enemies of those two nations in the open sea, were confined to privateers or small sloops, whose success or defeat could have no influence on the issue of the war. And in the rare instances in which our frigates contrived to distinguish themselves, they had recourse to their boats; sending them into the enemy's harbours, to attack the vessels which did not dare to leave that shelter.

But, though we had no encounter deserving the name of a battle with our old foes; we became embroiled with two new ones; and if we did not come off from each warfare with equal credit, the fleet at least performed its part equally well on both occasions, and any disappointment which attended our enterprises was chargeable solely to the blunders of our diplomatists. It is remarkable that both wars, that in the south of Europe as well as that in the north, arose out of considerations connected with Russia, and that those considerations were of an entirely opposite character, since, in the short period which intervened between these wars, that country so changed her character, that, having been our ally in February, she had become our enemy in August.

The treaty of Jassy, concluded in 1802, had given her an influence in the Turkish councils, of which France was jealous, and which indeed stood directly in the way of those designs upon the East that were perseveringly cherished by Napoleon; and when, in the summer of 1806, he had resolved to renew the war with Russia, he sent General Sebastiani as his ambassador to Constantinople to gain over the Sultan to his side. The capacity displayed by that officer in his new employment proved that the French Emperor had exercised in this instance his usual discernment in the choice of his instruments.



Under the General's influence, the Turkish Government adopted measures in plain violation of their engagements with the Court of St. Petersburg ; and, when the Russian ambassador, supported by our own, complained to the Divan of its infraction of existing treaties, Sebastiani sought to counterbalance their representations by presenting a counter-demand that the Turks should close the Bosphorus against Russian ships, and should renounce their alliance with Great Britain. The Turkish ministers, though willing to quarrel with Russia as a Power which they had at all times reason to fear, had no desire to break with us ; and consequently complied with only half Sebastiani's demand, excluding the Russians from the Bosphorus, but avoiding all measures which could be looked upon as directly prejudicial to our interests. We, however, made common cause with our northern ally ; and, by a threat that, if the hostility to Russia were persevered in, our fleet should at once attack Constantinople, we compelled the Sultan to recall his edicts, and to continue to execute his treaties with the Czar. Before, however, intelligence of this change in the Turkish councils could reach St. Petersburg, a Russian army had been sent to invade Moldavia, which rapidly overran that and the sister province of Wallachia, and indeed all the Turkish territories which lie to the north of the Danube. And on receiving the news of this invasion, the Sultan, not unnaturally, recalled his concessions, and in December, 1806, declared war against Russia, though still showing a desire to preserve friendly relations with ourselves. We still refused to separate our cause from that of the Czar, and the Cabinet at once sent orders to Collingwood to despatch a squadron to the neighbourhood of Constantinople, to enforce the representations which our ambassador, Mr. Arbuthnot, was instructed to make. Collingwood had already received from Mr. Arbuthnot intelligence of the state of affairs in Turkey, and had in consequence

sent Admiral Louis thither with three sail of the line and one or two frigates ; and he was deliberating whether he would not proceed thither himself with the greater part of his fleet, when he received the orders above-mentioned, which, framed under the belief that he himself would be unable to leave Cadiz, named Sir John Duckworth as the Commander of the force to be sent to the Dardanelles. To this officer, in whose professional skill and courage he felt as entire confidence as was reposed in them by the authorities at home, he gave three ships from his own fleet, the Royal George, 100, the Windsor Castle, 98, and the Repulse, 74 ; instructing him also to pick up the *Pompée*, 74, in which Sir Sidney Smith's flag was flying, and the *Ajax*, 74, off Sicily ; on his arrival in the Archipelago to take Admiral Louis also under his command ; and with the entire force to proceed to Constantinople ; and, if Mr. Arbuthnot should deem it right to commence hostilities, to demand the surrender of the Turkish fleet. It might be supposed that Collingwood, whose political sagacity was not unequal to his professional skill, had a kind of foreboding of the result of the expedition, when to his more precise instructions he added a recommendation that, "should any negotiation on the subject be proposed by the Turkish Government," it should not be allowed "to continue for more than half an hour."

Without loss of time, Duckworth sailed for the Archipelago, and on the 10th of February reached the island of Tenedos, notorious in ancient times for its bad anchorage,\* and in modern days as a refuge for the pirates who infest those seas. On his arrival he learnt that Louis had been to Constantinople, and had returned with our Ambassador, and that war was inevitable. That the Divan should have been terrified and bewildered by the demands of Arbuthnot and the counter-demands of Sebastiani, was not perhaps to be wondered at ; but, what was far more strange, Mr.

\* "Nunc tantum sinus et statio malefida carinis."—Virg. *Æn.* II. 23.

Arbuthnot had been terrified too, had deserted his post at Constantinople, and had taken refuge on board the *Endymion*, a frigate forming part of Admiral Louis's squadron, which had sailed with him to Tenedos, where Duckworth found him on his arrival at that island. It was plain that every consideration required the advance of the whole fleet to Constantinople; and thither therefore, with all a seaman's promptitude, Duckworth at once proceeded. He only reached Tenedos on the 10th of February, and on the morning of the 11th he weighed anchor, and steered for the entrance of the Dardanelles, the narrow strait which separates the Archipelago from the sea of Marmora, to which a mingled stream of fabulous and historical traditions has for three thousand years given an uninterrupted interest, and which never, perhaps, presented a grander spectacle than on this occasion, when the lofty ships of the Mistress of the Seas prepared to force their passage through it, and the stupendous batteries of the Turks were made ready to destroy the presumptuous invaders.

The strait was upwards of thirty miles in length, and so narrow that, even in midchannel, it was commanded by the guns placed on either shore. So ill at this time did our Ministers preserve the secrecy necessary for the success of these plans, that the Turks had received information of Duckworth's approach even before Admiral Louis knew that he was expected: and, casting off their usual dilatoriness, they had already made preparations for his reception.\* On each shore stood three large castles; one pair at the southern, another at the northern entrance, the third at the narrowest point of the whole channel, where Sestos and Abydos stand less than a mile apart: a space not too wide for a lover to swim, or for a tyrant to span with a bridge. Fortunately they had been allowed to fall into bad condition: their artillery was

\* See Collingwood's Letter to Lord Mulgrave, Aug. 19, 1807.

scantily provided with ammunition, and insufficiently manned. But their weakness was not suspected by our Admiral ; and it was with a strong sense of the dangers to which the ships might probably be exposed on their advance, and a still firmer belief that, should his expedition prove unsuccessful, those perils would be greatly augmented before he could return, that he nevertheless decided that the honour of his country required him to defy them.

As has been stated already, he therefore weighed anchor from Tenedos on the morning of the 11th of February ; but when, in the afternoon, he arrived at the mouth of the strait, an easterly wind prevented him from entering it ; and eight precious days were lost in waiting for a change, every hour of which was diligently employed by the Turks in strengthening their defences at every point. The delay was rendered further memorable to us by a sad calamity which befel one of our ships, the *Ajax*, 74, commanded by Captain Blackwood. On the evening of the 14th she was perceived to be on fire, and the flames had made such progress before they were discovered, that all attempts to preserve the ship were vain ; and, though her consorts lay close around her, it was found impossible to save even the whole of the crew. Blackwood himself, when nearly exhausted by swimming, was picked up by one of the boats of the *Canopus*, and nearly four hundred of his men were saved in a similar manner ; but the remainder perished in their vessel. At last, on the morning of the 19th, the wind became fair, and, blowing from the S.S.W., bore the fleet onwards to its destination. The ships sailed on in a rather open line, Admiral *Louis* in the *Canopus*, on account of the knowledge of the channel which he had already acquired, leading the way ; and, as they passed, the southern forts opened a heavy fire on them, which, however, did so little damage, that Duckworth did not condescend to return it. The cannonade

from the castles of Sestos and Abydos was too formidable to be treated with similar contempt; and the ships in the van replied to it with such terrible effect that it was greatly weakened before the rearmost ships came under it. These castles had an especial object in doing their best to cripple our fleet, since a little above them lay a Turkish squadron, which, consisting, as it did, only of one 64-gun ship, four frigates, and a few corvettes, was wholly unable to contend with it. Duckworth was aware of its position before he quitted Tenedos, and had entrusted Sir Sidney Smith with the charge of staying behind with the rear squadron and destroying it; which was now done with entire success, and almost without loss on our part. A party of marines was also landed on the Asiatic shore, who stormed a redoubt armed with thirty-one heavy guns, that had been constructed for the special protection of the anchorage where the Turkish squadron lay. They utterly demolished both the redoubt and the guns, and in the evening Sir Sidney rejoined the fleet. Dismayed by our success, the forts at the northern end of the strait made no attempt to offer any further hindrance to our progress. Our loss had been slight; in the whole fleet only ten men had been killed, and seventy-seven wounded: nor had the ships themselves received more damage than could be repaired in a few hours; but when their crews began to apply themselves to this necessary task, and examined the shot which had pierced the sides of some of the vessels, they marvelled at the slightness of the injury they had received. Many of the cannon-balls used by the Turks were found to have been made of stone, and to exceed eight hundred-weight. And the Admiral was in no respect exaggerating their power when he pronounced that if a single shot of that bulk had struck even the largest ship between wind and water, it must at once have sent her to the bottom.

The moment that the ships were refitted, the Admiral

proceeded to Constantinople ; and, on the evening of the 20th, he arrived off that city. But in the existing state of the wind and the currents, which run with great violence down the strait which divides the Sea of Marmora from the Black Sea, and at the mouth of which Constantinople stands, he found it impossible to approach it within eight miles ; at that distance, therefore, he came to anchor, off the island of Prota ; sending forward the *Endymion* frigate with some despatches from the Ambassador to the Sultan's Ministers : for Sir John's instructions directed him to act in concert with that gentleman, and, as far as might be, to govern his own proceedings by his judgment : and Mr. Arbuthnot entertained a hope, which the Admiral appears to have shared, that the passage of the Dardanelles, and the subsequent destruction of the Sultan's fleet might dispose that prince to avert further attacks by submission.\*

The *Endymion*, though only a frigate, could not that evening get within four miles of the city ; but, unluckily, she contrived to deliver the despatch with which she was charged. And early in the morning it was followed by a letter from the Admiral, demanding a compliance with the Ambassador's demands within four-and-twenty hours. Collingwood's suggestions had been sadly forgotten. Since the preceding night, the wind had changed, so that

\* In the first edition of this work it was stated that Sir John Duckworth "was placed in some degree under Mr. Arbuthnot's orders." But it has been pointed out to the author that that statement must be incorrect, since it is at variance with a fundamental rule of the Naval Service, which does not allow its officers ever to be placed "under the orders" of any military or civil authority whatever. A naval commander may be, and often is placed in a situation where he is liable to have requisitions addressed to him by some governor or diplomatist ; but he is at the same time expected to exercise his own independent professional judgment on the propriety of complying with such requisitions. He complies or refuses compliance on his own responsibility. If he refuses, he cannot be called in question for any disobedience of orders ; and, if his compliance brings disaster on the ship or fleet under his command, he cannot justify himself by pleading such requisitions.

it was in the Admiral's power to have at once stood in and bombarded the city ; and it is therefore not much to be wondered at, that Sebastiani was able to persuade the Sultan's Ministers that the writer of so temporising a letter was not of a character to act vigorously. As Napoleon himself, when in Egypt, had professed a willingness to enrol himself among the worshippers of Mahomet, and had offered up his prayers in the Grand Mosque of Cairo, his ambassador felt he need have no scruples about exhorting the Turks now to arm "in defence of their holy religion." And, while he skilfully taught them how to protract the negotiations to which Duckworth had so incautiously opened the door, he at the same time excited them to apply themselves with an energy never shown by them before or since, to strengthen their defences ; walls were repaired, batteries were armed, gunboats and ships of the line were manned, fireships and furnaces for heating shot were prepared. And in less than a week the city, which, when Duckworth first came in sight of it, could not have resisted his attack for an hour, was rendered impregnable to the utmost force which he could bring against it. Meantime Mr. Arbuthnot had fallen sick, so that the Admiral had the whole conduct of the negociation, as well as the operation of the fleet ; and the extent to which the service suffered, by duties so foreign to his habits being imposed upon him, may be judged of by the circumstance, that, fearless as he had always previously shown himself, the only warlike measure on which he ventured during the week miscarried from the excess of caution which he displayed in framing his orders. Having learnt that a body of Turks were constructing a battery on the island of Prota, on the morning of the 27th he sent some boats with a party of marines to attack them. They took a few prisoners and a couple of guns, and returned to their ships. But later in the day, Admiral Louis sent word to Duckworth that some Turks were still on the

island, and that it would be easy to capture them. Duckworth replied, that no risk must be run, but that if the enemy could be attacked without any danger to our men, it might be done ; and, not content with issuing this curious order, when our men had landed, and, being hotly engaged with the Turks, whom they found more numerous than they had expected, had made a signal for assistance, instead of reinforcing them, he sent in boats to bring them off, relinquishing the field to the Turks, whom, the slightest resolution would have placed in his power. If it be true, as is alleged by some writers, that Sebastiani himself was on the island, superintending the construction of the battery, the prize which the Admiral's unwonted caution let slip through his fingers, might even yet have been decisive of the whole campaign.

Sir John now began to ponder anxiously on his future conduct. The only day on which the wind had been entirely favourable for an attack on the city, had been the 22nd, which his grant of twenty-four hours' deliberation had unfortunately thrown away. Since that time, the wind had uniformly opposed itself to any attempt to come to close quarters ; and it was still as foul as ever. He saw the whole line of coast bristling with batteries ; a large fleet of upwards of twenty ships, with sails bent, and apparently full of troops, ready to come out against him ; rumours also reached him of an army of two hundred thousand men actually under arms in the city. And he saw no means of overpowering all the obstacles opposed to him : nor, even should he succeed in doing so, any prospect of his fleet coming out of a conflict with them, in a condition again to force a passage through the Dardanelles. He determined therefore to retreat while his resources were still unimpaired. And on the 1st of March he weighed anchor and prepared to return.

He had heard that the Turkish fleet had been equipped to attack him, and therefore he did not at once make sail ;



but stood on and off during the day to invite them, as it were, to a combat, but they were sufficiently pleased to get rid of him without one ; and, as they never moved, at night he bore to the southward, and the next evening arrived again off the northern entrance to the Dardanelles. Since it was impossible to thread that narrow channel in the dark, he anchored till morning, when he again weighed and held his way steadily down the Strait. The fire to which he was now exposed, proved, in his opinion, that he had not decided to return a moment too soon. In another week the Strait would have been rendered wholly unpassable ; so greatly had the Turks strengthened their batteries since his passage ten days before, and with such perseverance and judgment were they still labouring to render them yet more irresistible. Fortunately the wind was fair, so that the ships passed swiftly down, giving the Turkish gunners but little time to take accurate aim ; but, in addition to the old castles, several new forts and redoubts had been erected and armed, and old and new alike poured forth a ceaseless fire of shot, such as never had been seen nor imagined before. Many of the ships had a narrow escape ; a granite shot of eight hundredweight lodged in the mainmast of the Windsor Castle ; and had the mast fallen, and had the ship become disabled in consequence, she must not only have been taken herself, but might have seriously impeded the movements of those in her rear. Shot of similar dimensions struck most of the other ships ; one which fell on board the Standard, 64, killed and wounded no fewer than fifty-five men. Another entered the Active frigate only two feet above the water-line, but fortunately injured no one. As it was, the whole fleet reached the open sea without any serious disaster beyond the loss of nearly a hundred and sixty men in the brief cannonade to which they had been exposed.

On reaching the Archipelago, Duckworth was joined by a Russian squadron of eight sail of the line, whose co-opera-

tions he had been led to expect at an earlier period; and the Russian Admiral, M. Siniavin, proposed to him to return, and with this addition of strength, to renew the attack, or else to place some of the British ships under his command, and allow him to conduct it. But Sir John thought it too hazardous to expose a fleet, however numerous or powerful, to a third cannonade from such batteries as now lined the Straits: indeed, as he stated to Collingwood, when reporting the proposal, he did not believe Siniavin to be serious in making it, but rather looked upon it as a mere bravado, intended to conceal his consciousness of the impracticability of such an enterprise, which, at other times, the Russian confessed. Leaving, therefore, one or two vessels off Tenedos to blockade the Dardanelles, he, after a few days, sailed with the rest to Egypt. At the beginning of March we had despatched a small land-force from Sicily to attack Alexandria; and on the 21st, the day before Duckworth arrived, the city had been taken. Captain Hallowell, in the *Tigre*, 74, had had the command of the squadron employed in combination with the land-force, which he strengthened with a brigade of seamen from the ships; and his local experience, gained under Nelson at the Nile, was of great use to the Commander, Major-General Fraser, in planning the attack; but the city was scantily garrisoned, and the measures of our officers were taken with such promptitude and vigour that there was scarcely any fighting: none, indeed, except in an assault on some outworks, in which we did not lose twenty men; and then the city surrendered, with two frigates and a corvette lying in the old harbour, of which Hallowell took possession. Finding, therefore, that his presence there could be of no service, Duckworth returned to England. His conduct in the expedition was much canvassed, and by some, both at the time and since, has been severely arraigned. That the expedition had failed, could not be denied; and the Opposition tried to convert the failure

into a plea for attacking the Administration : while some, at least, of the Ministers showed an inclination to defend themselves by the sacrifice of the Admiral. An impartial examination of the whole transaction will probably decide that Sir John Duckworth showed no want of courage or of professional skill, but that at first he was perplexed, and his operations were hampered by the necessity imposed upon him by his orders of deferring to the judgment of an incompetent and irresolute diplomatist; and that, when the illness of that official threw upon him the whole burden of conducting the negociation, he, having had no advantage of diplomatic training, was wholly unequal to contend in that field with the wily and unscrupulous agent of the French Emperor.

Later in the year, Collingwood himself was directed to proceed to the Dardanelles ; and he laboured earnestly to convince the Sultan's Ministers that it was for their master's interests to conclude a peace with us. His own conciliatory manners were not without effect. After a time, his arguments were powerfully seconded by the news of the treaty of Tilsit ; and the principal Turkish officers did not scruple to avow that the only obstacle to peace was to be found in the engagements into which they had entered with the French : but they could not be got over ; and Collingwood returned to the Spanish coast, disappointed at his apparent failure, but feeling some satisfaction in the knowledge that he had certainly in a great degree appeased the angry feelings which Duckworth's expedition had awakened, and that he had smoothed the path for some future negociation at a more favorable moment. Before the close of the year, he reconnoitred Toulon, where he found a French squadron, apparently ready for sea ; but he saw clearly that they had no real intention of venturing out ; and believed that their state of preparation was paraded before us in order

to wear out our fleets by compelling them to keep the sea to watch them.

Our other war with a new foe, Denmark, gave no just ground for finding fault with the ministers who planned it, nor any plea whatever for blaming the warriors who conducted it. On the contrary, it was a brilliant example of prudence, promptitude, and energy in the Cabinet; and it was conducted to a thoroughly successful issue in the shortest possible time, and with a loss truly inconsiderable, when the magnitude of the objects aimed at and accomplished is taken into consideration. In July, the Emperors of France and Russia had made peace at Tilsit; and, among the secret articles of the treaty concluded on that occasion, was one by which those two potentates agreed to require Portugal, Sweden and Denmark, to close their harbours against all English vessels and to place their fleets at the disposal of France. Apparently Napoleon, though since Trafalgar he had given up the idea of raising the French seamen to an equality with ours, thought it might still be possible, by combining the fleets of the whole world against us to crush our navy by an overwhelming superiority of numbers. Fortunately our Foreign Office at this time was well served. The treaty had scarcely been signed, when our Ministers received ample and accurate information of the purport of the secret articles appended to it; and they took their measures without delay. Of the three Powers which it was intended thus to constrain to make war upon us, Denmark alone had such a fleet as could make its co-operation or its hostility important. She therefore was the Power which it was necessary to disarm; and the decision to disarm her was no sooner taken than it was acted on. The treaty of Tilsit was not signed till the 9th of July. On the 26th day of the same month, Admiral Gambier, with a fleet of seventeen sail of the line, besides smaller vessels, escorting an army of twenty thousand men

under Lord Cathcart, sailed from Yarmouth, charged to demand the surrender of the Danish fleet, to be held by us as a deposit during the continuance of the war with France, and to be restored unimpaired at the re-establishment of peace. Though we were fully justified in making the demand, it was absolutely impossible for a high-spirited nation to comply with it. The Danes rejected it with indignation ; replying to our professions of goodwill with a formal declaration of war : and their refusal left us no alternative but to employ force. The principal operations which ensued, fell to the share of the army, in which the officer who was second in command, and on whom, as upon Nelson in a similar position, six years before, the chief conduct of them devolved, was Sir Arthur Wellesley, soon, under the well-won title of Wellington, to be known as the greatest of British generals. A little delay was caused at first by a foul wind, which prevented the artillery from being landed ; but, as soon as that difficulty was surmounted, batteries were raised around Copenhagen, while the whole island of Zealand was blockaded by the fleet, which also cut off all communication between the Danish capital and Stralsund, which was now in possession of the French. The Danes were taken so completely by surprise that their fleet was not manned, nor in any way prepared for service ; and consequently the only actions that took place by sea were confined to one or two skirmishes between our advanced squadron and a flotilla of Danish gunboats, in which we lost a few men ; and on one occasion a transport was blown up by a shell from the great Trekroner battery, as formidable now as it had been when Riou fell beneath its guns ;\* but this was the whole loss sustained by our fleet. The bombardment of the city was executed chiefly by the army ; and was so well directed and decisive, that it soon compelled the Governor of the city to submit to our demands. On the 7th of September

\* See *ante*, p. 185.

the articles of capitulation were signed; and a fleet of eighteen sail of the line, fifteen frigates, and upwards of thirty brigs, prames, and gunboats was surrendered to our commanders. The entire loss sustained by us, both in fleet and army, amounted only to two hundred and sixty men killed and wounded; of whom not a fifth, even including those who perished by the explosion of the transport, fell on board the ships. And the importance of the success achieved was abundantly proved by the paroxysms of rage into which the intelligence of it threw Napoleon, who was thus once more compelled to renounce whatever expectations he had conceived of being able to collect a force able to contend with us at sea, and again to rely on his armies alone: though they too were fated eventually to find their master in the warrior who reaped the principal glory in this well-judged and well-conducted enterprise.

Even had the Danes been less under French influence than they were, it was not to be expected that a measure of such severity could produce in them any other feeling than that of bitter animosity towards us; though they were wholly destitute of means to give a practical effect to such a feeling. We acknowledged and pitied the constraint under which Denmark was now acting, but, as it could now no longer be disguised that her riches would be at the service of France, we proceeded to strip her of her colonial possessions; and sent orders to Sir Alexander Cochrane, our commander on the West Indian station to take possession of the two islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix, belonging to Denmark in that region. Neither of them was unfortified or devoid of a fair garrison; but the force which was sent against them was wisely and mercifully made too strong for any resistance to be possible; and consequently they were surrendered without a gun being fired on either side. Nor, though here alone we met no resistance, was this the only acquisition made by us this year

in those waters. It was on Christmas day that St. Croix fell into our possession ; but the year had opened well for us : for on the 1st of January, Captain Brisbane in the *Arethusa*, with a squadron of three other frigates, the *Latona*, Captain Wood ; the *Anson*, Captain Lydiard ; and the *Fisgard*, Captain Bolton, had captured the Dutch settlement of Curaçoa, than which, perhaps, no island in the entire West Indies was, for its size, more strongly fortified. The harbour of St. Anne, the only assailable point, is hardly more than fifty yards wide at the entrance ; and it was defended by regular fortifications of two tiers of guns : at its mouth was Fort Amsterdam, mounting sixty-six heavy guns, and manned by two hundred and seventy-five regular troops ; while the narrow entrance was moreover blocked up by the 36-gun frigate *Halstaar*, the 22-gun corvette *Surinam*, and two schooners ; and a chain of batteries erected on the heights behind, and Fort *République*, a castle of such strength as to be almost impregnable, commanded the harbour itself. In this case the attacking force was far weaker than the enemy against which it was advancing ; but the enterprise of our countrymen was favoured by the day. New Year's Eve had been spent by the Dutchmen in wonted festivity ; and they were still sleeping off their potations, when they were rudely awakened by the news that a British squadron was anchored alongside their town. Wishing, if possible, to avoid bloodshed, Captain Brisbane sent in a note to summon the Governor to surrender, giving him five minutes to deliberate ; and as he received no answer, at a quarter past six he opened his fire : in a few minutes he boarded the frigates and the other vessels ; in a few minutes more he landed in person with Captain Lydiard, and, at the head of a body of seamen, stormed Fort Amsterdam and the other forts nearest the water. In three-quarters of an hour from the firing of the first gun, the whole range of fortifications was in our possession : after a

negociation, necessarily brief, when we had only to dictate the terms, the Governor capitulated. At ten o'clock British colours were hoisted on Fort Republique, and the whole island was finally surrendered to us. This important success had been achieved with a loss of only three men killed and fourteen wounded ; and Captain Brisbane deservedly received the highest commendation for an enterprise so skilfully planned and carried out.

But of all the exploits of the year by far the most remarkable was one performed by Sir Edward Pellew. He has been already spoken of as Commander-in-chief in India: and, in the autumn of the preceding year, he received intelligence that M. Villaumez, with the squadron which Duckworth had chased, and whose disasters in the West Indies have already been recorded, was again on his way to the Indian seas. Suspecting him to be bound to Java, Sir Edward with a squadron of four sail of the line and two frigates, bore down to that island. Before he reached it, another frigate under his orders, the *Caroline*, 42, commanded by Captain Rainier, had fought a gallant action with the Dutch 40-gun frigate *Maria Riggersbergen*, and though she was supported by two or three corvettes and sloops and several gunboats, had compelled her to surrender. And when, a few weeks afterwards, he himself arrived with his whole squadron, several of the Dutch vessels, frigates, corvettes, brigs, and merchant-vessels, voluntarily ran ashore under the batteries of Batavia, and were burnt by the Admiral's second son, Captain Fleetwood Pellew, the captain of the *Terpsichore*, whom he sent in for that purpose. Finding that the French squadron, for which the Dutch had at first mistaken his ships, was not to be looked for that year, Sir Edward returned to Madras for the winter. He had hoped to have effected more ; for he had been informed that, besides the frigates and smaller vessels which his son had destroyed, two Dutch ships of the line were at Java ;



and he had seen no such vessels. But in the spring of 1807 he received information that they had retired to the eastern end of the island, and had worked up the river Sourabaya, as far as a town called Griesse; and thither, therefore, he determined to pursue them. At the mouth of the Sourabaya is a fine harbour formed by the river and the island of Madura, which lies in front of it; but the entrance to it was believed to be rendered impassable for such ships as an English seventy-four by a large bank of sand several miles in extent, lying across it for its whole length. The Dutch ships which he was pursuing had been got over it by being lightened of the greater part of their stores, and even of their guns, and were now believed to be in perfect safety. Sir Edward, however, determined to have them; and having lightened the Culloden, which bore his flag, as much as he could, and another 74, the Powerful, Captain Plampin, he proceeded to force his way up the river. He easily silenced some batteries on Madura, which assailed him with red-hot shot as he passed; but the Culloden grounded on the bank, and lay to all appearance as firmly fixed as she had been on the shoal at Aboukir. The Admiral shifted his flag to the Caroline; but before he had gone far, he learnt to his great joy that an unusually high tide had floated the seventy-four, and that the skill of her master had conducted her in safety over the bar into deep water. The Powerful had followed her; Sir Edward, returning to his own ship, now led the way up the river, and the Dutch were too much daunted by beholding among them a force such as they had fancied themselves wholly protected from by the sandbank, to make any further resistance. They surrendered everything that was demanded of them; and Pellew, having burnt the two ships of the line, a hulk, a 50-gun frigate, and having destroyed all the guns and military stores at Griesse, and the battery in Madura, returned once more to his station at Madras, without the loss of a single man.

It has been said that no French or British ship of any size was taken this year. One of our frigates, however, had but a narrow escape. Captain Jahleel Brenton was cruising in the Mediterranean in the 38-gun frigate *Spartan*, when, near the little island of Cabrera, he was met with by the French 74-gun ship *Hannibal*, the same which Sir J. Saumarez had lost at Algesiras, two frigates and a corvette; the line-of-battle ship chased him along one side of the island, while the frigates went round the other side to cut off his retreat. Their manœuvres so far succeeded, that, as he reached the end of the island, the leading frigate headed him, and being within gunshot, opened her fire. Captain Brenton, seeing active resistance to be entirely hopeless, forbade his men to return a shot; still continued his flight; and presently had the satisfaction of finding that the enemy's guns no longer reached him: in fact, her broadsides had entirely checked the slight wind around her, and she was becalmed, while the *Spartan*, from not firing a gun, kept the breeze, and was soon borne by it out of further danger.

It has been already mentioned that whatever captures our larger vessels made in 1807 were achieved by their boats: and one of these exploits is particularly remarkable from the circumstance that, though a service of this kind makes especial demand on the personal strength and activity of all concerned, the officer in command of the boats, Lieut. Coombe of the *Galatea*, had a wooden leg. The *Galatea*, Captain Sayer, had already distinguished herself by capturing with her boats three or four sloops and privateers under most difficult circumstances; and, in January of this year, she was cruising off the Caraccas, when she perceived a ship of war nearer the coast than herself, to which she at once gave chase. But presently the wind fell almost to a calm, and, as the enemy was furnished with sweeps as well as sails, she seemed likely to escape; and the only chance of preventing her from doing so lay in attacking her with the boats. Captain Sayer at

once determined on such an enterprise ; and though she was so far off that her topgallant-sails were scarcely visible, so that it was plain that the attacking party could receive no support whatever from the ship, he despatched against her every boat he had, with fifty seamen and twenty marines. The first-lieutenant, Mr. Coombe, led the way in the barge ; and, after nearly seven hours of hard pulling, he found himself within hail of his object, which he then made out to be a French corvette. A quarter of an hour before he had lain to to allow all the boats to close up, and to make his final arrangements for the attack : and now, on finding that no reply was given to his summons, he at once dashed on ; and, as the boats came up under the corvette's sweep, a desperate struggle ensued. The Frenchmen had already trained their guns aft, the better to repel the assault where alone it could be made ; and with their heavy fire of carronades, long guns, and musketry, twice beat back our men as they attempted to board. Lieutenant Coombe, and the second-lieutenant, Mr. Walker, were both severely wounded ; but still they cheered on their men, who, on their part too, plied their muskets with destructive effect, the French crew being collected on the quarterdeck in so dense a body that no ball missed its mark. After a few minutes they recoiled from our deadly fire ; and then, seeing the corvette's deck nearly clear, the British sailors made a third attempt, and gained a footing on it, though Lieutenant Walker who, in spite of the hurt he had already received, was now leading them, fell dead from a fresh wound. For a brief space the Frenchmen still struggled resolutely, but they were soon overpowered ; and in a quarter of an hour from the moment when the first boats touched her sides the corvette was ours. She was found to be the *Lynx*, equipped with sixteen guns and a hundred and sixty-one men, a number more than doubling that of her assailants. She had thirty-four men killed and wounded ; and of our sailors

no fewer than thirty-one, including all the officers, except Mr. Gibson, the third-lieutenant, were in the same list. Wearied, as the men must have been with a six hours' pull, they had performed an exploit which Sir Alexander Cochrane, the commander-in-chief on the station, justly pronounced one which, for determined bravery, had not been exceeded during the war.

Another expedition, in which even greater odds were overcome, received the warmest praise from Lord Collingwood. Captain G. Mundy, in the *Hydra*, 38, was cruising along the coast of Catalonia, when he fell in with three privateers, and chased them into the little harbour of Begur, which, in addition to its natural strength, was protected by a well-placed battery of four 20-pounder guns. Since the frigate drew too much water to be able to follow them herself, Captain Mundy sent in three of his boats to cut them out. As they advanced, the battery kept up so heavy a fire on them that Lieutenant Drury, who commanded the boats, resolved to silence that first. The cliff on which it stood was exceedingly steep; but the British sailors, having landed, scaled the rock and charged the battery with such impetuosity that the Spaniards fled without venturing on any resistance; and then the Lieutenant, having spiked the guns and left a few men to keep possession of the hill, returned with the rest to his boats to attack the ships. The crews, however, were so daunted by the defeat of their comrades in the battery that they deserted their vessels and landed, taking refuge among the rocks and bushes which fringed the shore, and from them keeping up a fierce but almost harmless fire on their conquerors. So animated was their fire that Captain Mundy judged it necessary to send in the rest of his boats to support the first division; but their aid, though it probably saved some lives by the additional facility which they gave for re-embarking the men who had been landed, was not needed to warp out the privateers which, in the

course of the afternoon, were all conducted in safety out of the harbour, the success obtained having no alloy beyond the loss of one man killed and six wounded.

The next year the character of the war was again altered. Russia, our alliance with which had in a great degree led us into the war with the Turks, had become our enemy; and the insatiable ambition and lawless aggression of Napoleon had driven Spain into our arms as a friend. Her alliance with us, the first that had been concluded for many years, had a most auspicious opening; for the French squadron, which had been lying at Cadiz under the command of Admiral Rosilly ever since Trafalgar, and which had been blockaded by us almost without interruption during the whole period, was thus placed between two fires; and being cannonaded by a flotilla of Spanish gunboats and by some batteries which had been erected on shore to command their anchorage, surrendered without resistance. But in other respects the change in the circumstances of Spain, though all-powerful in its effects on the issue of the war, produced no results calling for any more than a passing allusion in this history, since the Spaniards never had any fleet at sea, nor did the French make any attack on either their coasts or their foreign settlements, which called for any exertions of ours to defend them.

The French themselves, in spite of the lessened interest with which Napoleon now regarded its operations or its prospects, had gradually strengthened their navy; but still only one expedition ventured out from a French port during the year; and even that, after a few weeks, in which it had a most narrow escape from Collingwood, was glad to take refuge in its own harbours again, without having effected anything or taken a single prize. At the beginning of the year, the British Commander-in-chief had gone with a small squadron to the coast of Sicily, where the timid Court, distrusting our power to protect it against both French and Russians, was beginning to coquet with the

latter power ; and he was lying with three sail of the line, the Ocean, the Canopus, and the Malta, in the harbour of Syracuse, when M. Ganteaume with a French fleet passed by the southern cape of the island, without either Admiral suspecting the proximity of the other. In January, Sir Richard Strachan, who was blockading Rochefort, had been driven off the land by some fresh gales, on which M. Allemand stole out with five sail of the line, entered the Mediterranean, and joined Ganteaume, who, with five more, was anxiously expecting him at Toulon. Thus reinforced, Ganteaume ventured to sea, and made his way to Corfu ; where he landed reinforcements and stores of all kinds, to enable the existing French garrison to make a stand in the event of our attacking it. Collingwood himself had crossed over to that island for a short time during the winter, and had but lately quitted it on his return to Sicily, leaving Captain Harvey in the *Standard*, 64, and Captain Mowbray in the *Active* frigate, to maintain a blockade. On Ganteaume's arrival in the neighbourhood, one division of his fleet drove away these ships, and Harvey sent word to the Admiral of the appearance of this squadron, which he believed to be a Russian force ; but Collingwood knew the Russians to be at Trieste, and, as Captain Harvey only spoke of four foreign ships, he was entirely at a loss to know what they could be. Probably Ganteaume did not know how small a force the British Admiral had with him at this time, or he would have hardly taken such pains to conceal his movements. Collingwood had not gone so far from the French coast as Sicily without leaving a frigate to watch Toulon : but, on the 16th of February, the *Apollo*, to which he had entrusted that duty, was driven from her station by a heavy gale ; and when, three days afterwards, she returned to her post, she found the French fleet had sailed. They had seized all the shipping in the Sardinian harbours, to prevent them from giving intelligence of their

movements : and Collingwood, who could not suppose that they had no more important object in view than the relief of Corfu, was in great perplexity and anxiety.\* The fact of their having troops on board seemed to point to Egypt as their destination ; but still, remembering the plans they had formed in 1805, he thought it not impossible that they might now too have our own islands for their ultimate destination, and that their intention might be to add the squadrons at Carthage and Cadiz to their own force ; and then, with their whole force, which these additions would raise to thirty sail of the line, to bear northwards for the Channel. He was, as Nelson in the same waters had often been, sadly in want of frigates ; and when he first heard of the arrival of the Rochefort squadron in the Mediterranean he was unable to quit Syracuse for want of wind. But on the 24th a breeze sprang up, and with his little squadron he weighed anchor and repaired to the western end of the island, and took up his station off Maritimo, where he expected to be joined by a force which might enable him to pursue Ganteaume, if he should be able to learn where he was to be found. One ship of the line, the Repulse, he left at Syracuse ; another, the Montagu, he sent to Messina to watch those straits ; and smaller vessels he despatched to Tunis, Pantellaria, and Minorca, to gather news. Even had he been able to

\* As a general rule the author has forbore to encumber his pages with references to his authorities, which swell the bulk of a book without really assisting the reader ; nor in cases where previous writers have raised points of controversy and discussed them with great mutual bitterness, has he thought it advisable to take any part in such discussion, contenting himself with giving the most accurate account in his power of each transaction which he narrates. But his relation of Collingwood's operations at this time is so wholly at variance with that given in the work generally considered as the chief authority on the naval history of the French war, that it seems desirable to depart from his general rule so far as to say that the account given in the text is compiled from the despatches of Lord Collingwood himself at the Admiralty, and from such logbooks of his squadron as are to be found there, which probably Mr. James, writing at a period so much nearer the time to which they referred, was not permitted to examine, and which, at all events, it is manifest were never seen by him.

learn where the French were, he could not have pursued them till he was reinforced. But on the 2nd of March Vice-Admiral Thornborough joined him, with his own squadron and that of Sir R. Strachan, which, with the ships that Collingwood previously had with him, made up a splendid fleet of fifteen line-of-battle ships ; and, though he was still without any distinct information of the enemy's movements, he now cruised about off the southern coast of Sicily, in the hope of falling in with them. He was not fortunate enough to do so. He judged rightly in concluding, when he learnt that Ganteaume had landed his troops at Corfu, that he would soon return to Toulon. But he was mistaken in supposing that he would take the same line as that which he had chosen when sailing eastward. The Frenchman now bore down to the south, hugging the shores of Africa ; and, having by this course eluded his pursuer, though it is not clear whether he was aware that he was being pursued, on the 10th of April he re-entered Toulon, and there remained safe, but inactive, till the end of the year.

The outbreak of war with Russia compelled us, of course, to send a fleet also into the Baltic ; and accordingly, at the beginning of the summer, Sir James Saumarez sailed to that sea with eleven sail of the line, and Sir Samuel Hood as second in command ; while a smaller squadron was despatched into the same waters under Sir R. Keats. Though the Russians likewise had a fleet at sea, no general engagement took place. The Swedes were still in alliance with us, and they too had a squadron cruising about, but it was in bad condition ; the ships were not even coppered, and the crews had but little experience of the sea. To encourage and strengthen them, Saumarez detached Hood with his own ship the *Centaur*, and another seventy-four, the *Implacable*, Captain Byam Martin, to join their squadron ; and the only shots that were fired, came from these two ships, in an action which did not increase



the desire of the Russians to measure their strength with us, since their ship which was engaged was taken twice over, and at last destroyed before the face of all her comrades. The Russian Admiral, M. Hanickoff, with two first-rates of 120 and 118 guns, seven seventy-fours, three 50 gun ships, and a few frigates, came in sight of the Swedish fleet of ten sail of the line, one having 78 guns, one 76, six 74, and two 66, and the two English seventy-fours off Carlscrena; but, though he had thus a slight superiority in the number of his guns, he declined an engagement, and retreated. The Swedes and Hood pursued, and the English ships far outsailing their Swedish comrades, the Implacable, which was the faster of the two, the next day came up with the Russian 74, Sewolod, brought her to action, and after a short contest compelled her to strike her colours. Before, however, Captain Martin could take possession of his prize, the whole Russian fleet bore up to save her, and Hood was compelled to recall the Implacable; while a Russian frigate took the Sewolod in tow. She was, however, far from being out of danger; for, as soon as the Implacable had repaired some slight damage which she had received in her rigging, she, with the Centaur, renewed the chase, compelled the frigate, for the sake of her own safety, to cast off the Sewolod; and, as the Russian Admiral again endeavoured to save her, Hood had some hope of bringing him to a general action. But, on reflection, M. Hanickoff thought better of it, and retired into the harbour of Rogerswick, at the entrance of which the Sewolod, being too much disabled to be quite manageable, took the ground. As soon as the rest of the fleet had anchored, they sent boats to her assistance, which got her off, and began to tow her into port; but Hood gave them no time. He at once ran on board of her, and, as the rigging of the two ships became entangled, Captain Webley of the Centaur lashed them together with his own hands, and setting sail, endea-

voured to drag the Russian out. She, however, let go an anchor on the further side, and still made a gallant resistance : she repelled more than one attempt to board her, but gradually the heavy fire of the Centaur's guns, and the musketry of the British marines, overpowered her; and for the second time she hauled down her flag. She had hardly surrendered, when the Centaur grounded too ; and once more the Russian fleet bore down towards her, hoping apparently to rescue her, and perhaps to capture her conqueror. But before they had made much way, the Centaur floated ; the Russians again fell back ; and Sir Samuel, being now hopeless of succeeding in carrying the Sewolod off, burnt her, and rejoined the Swedish fleet.

It was with a different object that Keats and his squadron had been despatched to the Kattegat. Napoleon, who, when he first entangled Spain in the alliance which proved so injurious to her, and which he intended should prove ruinous, had exacted from her a contingent of troops to reinforce his army, having gradually moved it further and further from its own sunny land, was now employing it in the Danish islands. Its general was the Marquis Romana, who, though he died too soon for his country, yet lived long enough to secure Wellington's highest esteem,\* by the talents and virtues which he displayed in his country's cause, in the great war which, with our aid, she was now preparing to maintain. As soon as Romana heard of the treatment which his sovereign had received from the French Emperor, he communicated the intelligence to his men. They, as he expected, resolved at all risks to renounce the service of the enemy of Spain ; but they were widely scattered. Romana and the regiments under his immediate command were in Tyen ; another

\* He died at the beginning of 1811, and Wellington pronounced "his loss the greatest which, under existing circumstances, the cause could sustain."—Yonge's 'Life of Wellington,' i. p. 203.

regiment was in Jutland, and two more in Zealand. Fortunately Keats, with the *Superb*, and two other seventy-fours, the *Brunswick* and *Edgar*, and a few frigates and smaller vessels, was at Nyeborg, in Tyen, and with him *Romana* at once opened a communication. The British Admiral entered warmly into the plan for securing the free action of so important a body of men. He addressed a letter to the Danish Governor of Nyeborg, promising to abstain from all acts of hostility, on condition of his offering no hindrance to the retreat of the Spaniards, but threatening to destroy the town if any obstacles to it were interposed. The Governor submitted: but two small Danish men-of-war rejected Keats's proposal, and, anchoring in front of the harbour, showed such resolution to proceed to hostilities, that he was forced to attack and capture them; after which he fitted up as transports a number of Danish sloops which he found in the harbour, embarked in them the Spaniards, their artillery, baggage, and stores, and conducted them in safety to England, from which they were not long afterwards conveyed to their own country. Sir James Saumarez, who had received despatches from England, desiring him to assist *Romana* in his enterprise, had, with the main body of the fleet, made his way up the Belt with that object; but before he arrived, he found it had been accomplished by Keats. He retraced his steps, and presently hearing of the retreat of the Russian fleet to Rogerswick, he hastened thither to join the Swedes, in the hope that it might be assailable to their united forces. But he found them strongly secured in a narrow channel between the mainland and the island of East Raga; and in front of their position they had moored a stout boom, while more than one heavy battery commanded the approaches. The Swedish Admiral proposed to procure a land-force, which might take possession of East Raga; and Hood, it is believed, was eager to attack the Russians where they lay. But Sir James had

learnt at Algesiras at how great a disadvantage a fleet fights which has to contend with ships, land-batteries, and shoals at the same time ; and rejected both suggestions. He looked with greater favour on the plan of burning the hostile fleet with fireships ; but, when such an attempt was made, it failed, chiefly because the night selected proved so bright, that the fireships were discovered while still at a distance, and at last, as winter approached, Sir James returned home, leaving the command to Admiral Keats ; who, though by his presence affording important countenance to Sweden, was of course prevented by the frozen condition of the Baltic from performing or even attempting any exploit till the return of spring.

If the Russians in the Baltic fared but ill, their countrymen at a distance had still worse fortune. After Duckworth had quitted the Archipelago, Admiral Siniavin had defeated a Turkish squadron ; and subsequently, on hearing of the treaty of Tilsit, quitted the Mediterranean to return to St. Petersburg, being, according to some accounts, unwilling to serve against England, as having been brought up in the British navy. At the time of the convention of Cintra, he, with nine sail of the line and a frigate, was lying in the Tagus, and Junot demanded that an article in the treaty should ensure his safe departure to his own country. He might very probably have extorted such a concession from the weakness of Sir Hew Dalrymple ; but luckily Admiral Sir Charles Cotton, who was at this time blockading the coast, declared that it belonged to him, and not to any general, to deal with the fleet ; and he peremptorily refused to allow a single ship to escape. Resistance was impossible, and, after some discussions, another convention was agreed upon, by which the Admiral, his officers and crews were conveyed in British ships to Russia ; but the ships themselves, with all their stores, were surrendered to Sir Charles, to be taken to

England, and there detained as deposits to the end of the war.

How little the Turkish sailors were able to contend with British sailors in the open sea, was shown by an action, in which the *Seahorse*, 42, Captain Stewart, having attacked two Turkish frigates, one of 52 guns, and one of 26, put the smaller vessel to flight, and captured the larger. They had quitted the Dardanelles, and had gone down to the western side of the Archipelago, in pursuit of some pirates who had been plundering the adjacent coast, when, on the evening of the 5th of July, Captain Stewart learnt that they were in his neighbourhood, and, setting sail in the direction where the information he had received led him to expect to find them, shortly after sunset he came up with them. The larger of the two, the *Badere-Zaffer*, having not only a more powerful armament than the *Seahorse*, but also a crew which outnumbered the British sailors by nearly three hundred men, more than once attempted to board her antagonist; but this mode of attack the *Seahorse* eluded, and, keeping off at a short distance, poured broadside after broadside into her with destructive effect, both upon her crew and upon her rigging, while the Turks, though making almost equal noise, were such indifferent marksmen, that the British frigate suffered very little. When the battle had lasted half-an-hour, the smaller frigate, the *Alis Fezan*, seeing how severely her consort was suffering, gallantly interposed to take off some of Captain Stewart's attention from her: but she was wholly unable to support the heavy British fire, and retired after receiving a few broadsides, one of which caused a great explosion on her deck; and the *Seahorse*, without delay, renewed the contest with the *Badre-Zaffer*. Though the slaughter made by our guns was great, yet still the Turks far outnumbered our men; and fought, if with little skill, yet, with such determined gallantry and resolution, that though all their topmasts had been shot

away, they, nevertheless, maintained the combat for nearly three hours more, by which time it had got so dark that both ships, by common consent, drew off. At dawn the Seahorse again bore down upon her antagonist to renew the action, but the daylight had revealed to the Turkish officers the extent of the loss and damage which they had sustained, and, though their Captain, an officer named Scandril, was still eager to fight, they constrained him to surrender. The returns of killed and wounded show the difference of skill with which the two vessels had been fought. The Seahorse had four men killed and ten wounded. The Badere-Zaffer had no fewer than a hundred and seventy killed and two hundred wounded. Nor had the British frigate sustained more injury to her rigging than the labour of an hour or two could repair, while the Turkish vessel had not only her rigging cut to pieces, her topmasts shot away, and two of her lower masts badly wounded, but was also so shattered in the hull that it was only with difficulty that she could be kept afloat. No officer of any nation could have displayed more courage and resolution than Captain Scandril; but it was plain that, both in seamanship and gunnery, the Turks had much to learn before any superiority of apparent strength could make them a match for British sailors.

It was a far harder contest that lay before Captain Michael Seymour in the *Amethyst*, 42, when, towards the end of this same year, she attacked the *Thetis*, 44, though the latter had no consort to assist her. If the difference in the number of the guns borne by the two ships was the slightest possible, yet in weight of metal the French frigate had a decided advantage, and a still greater superiority in the number of her crew, for the complement of the British ship was only two hundred and sixty-one men; but the *Thetis* had, besides her three hundred and thirty sailors, a body of a hundred soldiers on board, who, in the hand-to-hand struggle that ensued, were cal-

culated to be of almost as much service as the most experienced seamen. She had but just quitted L'Orient for the West Indies, when the Amethyst, which was cruising off the Isle of Groix, descried her; and, at once pursuing her, after a chase of little more than three hours, brought her to action. As it was past sunset when the ships first saw each other, the Thetis for some time held on her way in hope to escape in the darkness; but the Amethyst from the first was too near her to allow that hope to be realised; and, as soon as the French captain, M. Pinsun, saw that an action was inevitable, he prepared for, and entered into it with as great gallantry as if it had been the object which he most desired. For a short time the two ships kept up a running fight, in which we came off with by far the best fortune, as the enemy's guns did little injury except to our mizen rigging, while several of their best men were killed at the wheel. Presently the Frenchman shortened sail with a view to bring on a closer combat. The Amethyst, equally willing to come to close quarters, also took in several of her sails; and both antagonists began to manœuvre to gain some advantage in position. As the Amethyst drew nearer, the French captain put his helm hard-a-port, and luffed up in order to rake her bows; and when Captain Seymour, promptly putting his helm a-starboard, baffled this manœuvre, so that of the well-intended broadside only three guns took effect, the French Captain bravely laid his ship alongside her antagonist, and engaged her almost muzzle to muzzle of the guns. Presently he again tried to place the Thetis in a position to rake our vessel by passing under her stern; but again Captain Seymour was quicker than he, and, getting the French ship's jibboom entangled with the Amethyst's main rigging, turned his manœuvre against himself, raking him for a few minutes with great effect, while, for a moment, the Amethyst was in danger of even greater injury, having been set on fire by combus-

tibles which the French crew threw on board her while the two ships were entangled. Captain Pinsun tried to take advantage of the confusion thus created by boarding, and was preparing to head the boarders himself, when he fell back mortally wounded ; and, before his party had recovered from the confusion which this accident caused, the French jibboom gave way, and the two ships got clear of one another, the Amethyst pouring in a most effective raking broadside as they parted. Soon, however, both ships became less manageable. The action had lasted something more than an hour, when the Amethyst's mizenmast fell. The French crew raised a cheer of exultation, the British replied by a shout of defiance ; repeating it more triumphantly a minute or two afterwards, when the Thetis's mizenmast also came down. To their cheers the Frenchmen had no heart to reply, though the Amethyst had suffered most from this misfortune, since, in her case, the wreck broke the wheel. The conflict was now resumed broadside to broadside, the ships being within pistolshot of one another. But at the end of half an hour more the Thetis, finding that she was suffering terribly from the precision of the British fire, and confiding in the superior numbers of her crew, again ran on board the Amethyst. As the ships touched, one of the Amethyst's anchors entered the second maindeck-port of the Thetis, and held her fast without the possibility of again disentangling herself, till the conclusion of the action ; and at the same moment a terrific cannonade mowed down her boarders. There had been a momentary lull as she advanced to close, Captain Seymour reserving his fire till he could deliver it with the greater effect ; but, as her hull grazed ours, and the word of command to board was heard, the whole of the British broadside was poured into her with such effect as to disable the greater part of her guns, and to reduce her to depend for the rest of the contest on her musketry alone. The number of soldiers whom she had



on board, however, rendered that most formidable and mischievous to our men: and at last, after maintaining the conflict for some time longer with his heavy guns, Captain Seymour thought he had weakened his enemy sufficiently to try the effect of boarding himself. The struggle, now transferred to the deck of the *Thetis*, though bloody, was brief. The French Captain was dead; and at twenty minutes after twelve, above three hours after the commencement of the action, the French colours were hauled down. It had been no cheap victory to the conquerors, who had to lament seventy of their number killed and wounded; but of the French no fewer than two hundred and thirty-seven had fallen, of whom a hundred and thirty-five, including the Captain, were slain, and all her officers were wounded but three. The *Thetis* had hardly surrendered when both her other masts fell. The fore and mainmasts of the *Amethyst* still stood, though severely wounded; and it is worth remarking, as a proof of the resolution of the French to fight the battle fairly out, that contrary to their usual practice, they had aimed more at their enemy's hull than at her rigging, and had shattered that so greatly that when the battle ceased the *Amethyst* was found to have above three feet of water in the hold. The *Thetis* was in greater danger still, for we had hardly taken possession of her when we found her to be on fire; but our men, by great exertions, extinguished the flames; and, in less than an hour, two other British ships, the *Triumph* and the *Shannon*, came up, and assisted Captain Seymour in refitting the two ships, the *Shannon* also taking the prize in tow, and conducting her in safety to Plymouth.

But of all our gallant captains at that time afloat, the most unwearied and the most brilliantly successful was still Lord Cochrane. When the *Pallas* was paid off he was appointed to the *Impérieuse*, 38, and was allowed to take with him the whole of the *Pallas's* crew, who were already, in some degree, trained to his peculiar style of warfare.

With her, in the autumn of 1807, he joined the Mediterranean fleet, having picked up a pirate that had been doing much mischief on his way ; and, in the spring of 1808, Lord Collingwood, who fully appreciated his pre-eminent talents for desultory warfare, despatched him to the Catalonian coast, with a discretionary power to act in whatever manner he might find himself most able to impede the French in their endeavours to secure their hold in that part of Spain. The moment that he reached his appointed station he began his operations, harassing the enemy whether at sea or in harbour, till they became almost reckless from an utter despair of safety as long as he was in the neighbourhood. If they put to sea, he chased and captured them ; if they ran along the coast, or sought to shelter themselves in harbour, he sent in parties to cut them out, standing in himself with the frigate as near as he could, and aiding the boats with his long guns. If batteries on shore ventured to assail him, he either silenced them with his cannonade, or landed a body of seamen and marines, which stormed and disabled them. He did not even always confine his operations to attacks upon the enemy's shipping or coast-defences, but took upon himself to act against their army ; on one occasion landing and destroying the road and several bridges by which the French General Duhesme was advancing with an army against Barcelona ; and, to check that officer's advance more effectually, he even prevailed on a body of Spanish militia to aid him in an attack upon the strong castle of Mongol, which was occupied by a French company ; and while the Spaniards attacked it on the landward side, he stood in and battered it with broadsides from the *Impérieuse*, compelled it to surrender, and blew it up. Yet, while performing these important services, so far was he from anything like rashness that he scarcely ever lost a man. He justly thought the preservation of the lives of his followers one of the

first duties of an officer ; and so deeply seated was this feeling in his mind, that when, nearly half a century afterwards, he occupied himself in giving to the world the history of his achievements, he dwelt upon no feature in them with more satisfaction than on the circumstance that "no commander, having gone through such service, ever had fewer men killed."

He says of himself, with truth, that in some of the operations of which a sketch has thus been given, he had been uniting the work of an engineer to that of a naval captain ; it must be added, to the credit of his sagacity, that he appears to have been the very first man to perceive the singular capacity of the Spaniards for that peculiar system of operations known as guerilla warfare. As he was moving along the coast towards the French border, he halted to land and inspect some batteries which they were erecting on the road to Gerona ; and instructed them how to strengthen them according to the rules of art ; but when he learnt that the district was reckoned upon to furnish three thousand armed peasantry, he counselled the Spanish officers to rely rather on the activity and energy of such troops than on any stationary fortification, which sooner or later must inevitably yield to the scientific attack of superior numbers.

Rightly judging that he had stopped the progress of the French along the Catalonian coast for some weeks, he resolved on letting France herself feel his presence, and accordingly he worked along the shore from the frontier to the mouth of the Rhone, destroying batteries, telegraphs, and signal-stations as he went, and carrying off the signal-books, by means of which (since the French had no suspicion of their having fallen into our possession), when the telegraphs were re-established, our fleets acquired all the information which the French scouts desired to convey to their own countrymen alone. It was in vain that the French, though he was landing almost

daily on their territory, endeavoured to cut him off, sometimes bringing up cavalry to try and intercept him. In the whole of these enterprises he had but one man hurt, who was scorched by the explosion of his own cartouch-box, which caught fire as he was kindling a train laid to blow up a battery.

After a month spent in this manner he returned to the Spanish coast, still from time to time cutting out vessels and destroying batteries as he proceeded: and, after cruising about for a short time on one errand and another, in the middle of November, hearing that the French were threatening Rosas, a place of considerable military importance, he sailed to that town, in the hope of finding some means of assisting the garrison and distressing the besiegers. Rosas lies in a basin fronted by the sea, and surrounded at the back by a semicircular chain of heights, which, when the *Impérieuse* arrived, were already occupied by the French troops, who, to the number of six thousand, had invested the place in force on the landward side before Lord Cochrane arrived. The Spaniards, however, had not been left wholly to themselves, since Captain West in the *Excellent*, 74, and afterwards Captain Bennet in the *Fame*, a line-of-battle ship of similar strength, with one or two bombvessels, had been giving them energetic and judicious assistance. Captain West had even landed with a powerful body of seamen and marines, and had borne a share with the garrison of the citadel in more than one sally which they had made upon the besiegers' works, lending also a small detachment of his men to reinforce the garrison which occupied Fort Trinidad, the most important of all the outposts on which the town relied as its principal defences. Captain Bennet, when he relieved Captain West, had been almost equally active; but, on Lord Cochrane's arrival, he departed to rejoin the main fleet; and on the crew of the *Impérieuse* devolved the task of protracting the defence of the place as long as

possible : for that was all that could be expected, unless the Spanish armies in the interior should advance to act upon the rear of the besiegers. The Spanish officers gladly deferred to Lord Cochrane's counsels ; and, leaving his first lieutenant full instructions how to operate with the frigate during his absence, on the 24th of November he threw himself with a picked body of seamen and marines into Fort Trinidad, which was the key to the place. Had he not done so, the Commandant would have surrendered the place the next day ; but now, encouraged by the presence of the British Captain, he declared his determination to hold out to the last. Fortunately the height on which the fort stood had an easy descent to the sea, so that the communication between it and the frigate was secure from interruption ; but, on the other hand, it was commanded by a still higher hill in the possession of the French, on which they had constructed a heavy battery that kept up a continued fire, which was gradually making a breach in the walls ; though the lowest portion of this breach was at such a height from the ground that it was evident that whenever they should attempt to enter by it they would be forced to trust to scaling ladders of unusual length. That eventually they would make the breach practicable and force an entrance, Lord Cochrane considered certain ; and he accordingly began to devise all kinds of contrivances to make their entrance fatal to themselves instead of to the garrison. Finding that behind the breach was a hollow arch covering a vast chasm fifty feet deep, he broke away the crown of the arch, and cased its edges with a wooden frame carefully greased, so that the stormers, as they made their way in, must inevitably fall into this trap, from which there was no escape. Behind the arch he erected barricades, and surrounded them with iron chains which he brought from the ship, and armed with enormous fishhooks, on which any who escaped the pitfall must be caught ; and, not content with these measures of

mere defence, whenever the French troops came within range he bade the frigate open a fire upon them, which caused them heavy loss.

But he could not save Rosas : the incurable dilatoriness of the Spanish authorities, which Wellington afterwards found so great a hindrance to his operations, now rendered all Cochrane's exertions barren. At midnight, on the 26th of November, the French stormed the town and carried it ; and, six hours afterwards, two thousand Spanish troops arrived from Gerona to reinforce the garrison, whom a little more speed on their part would have saved from defeat and captivity. Having possessed themselves of the town, the besiegers redoubled their efforts to take the citadel and Fort Trinidad ; being greatly assisted in the erection of batteries and intrenchments, by the protection which the buildings of the town afforded them. Lord Cochrane, on his part, did not abate his exertions, though his hopes were now necessarily limited to delaying the fall of the castle, which he had no prospect of ultimately averting. He made it cost the French very dear. One attempt to storm Fort Trinidad, made by a chosen body of twelve hundred men, he repelled with immense slaughter ; the stormers leaving upwards of fifty dead behind them, while he only lost three men. But at last, on the 5th of December, the citadel, in which the French had made a practicable breach, capitulated ; and, as this event left the besiegers at liberty to turn their whole attention on Fort Trinidad, he decided that to attempt to maintain it any longer, would be a wanton waste of life. He accordingly withdrew both his own men and the Spanish garrison, conveying them on board the frigate without the slightest loss ; and destroying as much of the fortress as he could blow up.

He had well deserved the praises of his Admiral ; and they were most cordially bestowed. Collingwood reported to the Admiralty that " the zeal and energy with which

he had maintained the fortress, excited the highest admiration," that "his resources for every exigency had no end." But great as his services had been, they obtained for him no reward nor favour at Whitehall. Unfortunately, as has been said before, he was also a member of Parliament, and in that capacity he had not only shown as much energy in exposing official abuses, as he had displayed in his more proper element against the French ; but had also leagued himself with demagogues who were deservedly obnoxious to all who were interested in the maintenance of order and the preservation of the Constitution. Many have expressed indignation, and all must feel regret that the recollection of his parliamentary opposition should have been allowed to operate as a bar to these great services against the enemy obtaining their due recognition ; but those who condemn the Ministers of the day for not overlooking such vehemence of political animosity, in consideration of the offender's professional merit, should at the same time, not altogether withhold their censure from the officer whose want of judgment thus led him out of his proper sphere ; and should rather hold up as patterns to the profession, men like Nelson and Collingwood, who were of no faction, but were contented to serve their country in their own profession, without regarding the political divisions which, in their time as at all others, disturbed its harmony and perplexed its rulers.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

1809.

Collingwood destroys a French squadron — Expels the French from some of the Ionian Islands — Dies — His character — Blockade of French squadrons — Those at Brest get into Rochefort — Lord Gambier blockades Rochefort — The Admiralty proposes to Lord Cochrane to destroy the French ships there — Jealousy caused by the appointment — Admiral Harvey is tried and cashiered — Lord Cochrane attacks the French fleet — Destroys some — Is recalled by Lord Gambier — Consternation of the French — Lord Gambier is tried and acquitted — An expedition is sent against Flushing — Takes Flushing — Returns — Sickness and mortality among our troops — Sir James Saumarez in the Baltic — Reduction of Senegal, Cayenne and Martinique — Capture of the D'Hautpoul — Brilliant conduct of Captain C. Napier — Captain Seymour takes the Niemen.

THE following year was one of extraordinary activity on the part of our navy in every quarter of the globe ; it was also one of unvaried success. Even in the unfortunate expedition to the Scheldt, the fleet performed its part with credit ; and though, in one instance, the want of hardihood and capacity evinced by the Admiral charged with the conduct of the most important enterprise of the year, stinted to a partial victory the exertions of his officers who, had they been more fortunate in their commander, would have gained a complete and glorious triumph ; yet, for any other nation, it would have been no trifling exploit to have destroyed four ships of the line and a frigate, and to have proved to the enemy that their own harbours and shoals were insufficient to protect them. In the course of the year, we indeed lost two frigates, the *Junon* and the *Prosperine* ; both of which were overpowered by superior numbers ; and of which the *Junon* had herself come into



our possession in the same manner a few months earlier. But of French line-of-battle ships and frigates we took or destroyed more than ten times that number; and also extended our conquests among their colonial settlements without suffering any retaliation in that kind of possession.

The destruction of two of the line-of-battle ships, was the last achievement of Lord Collingwood. He had shifted his flag from the Ocean into the Ville de Paris, but was still cruising about the western waters of the Mediterranean, watching eagerly for M. Ganteaume's fleet, which he knew to be lying ready for sea in Toulon. Once in the spring a small squadron, laden with supplies for Barcelona, did succeed in stealing out as far as that city, and, after landing its stores, regained its harbour without molestation; and on another occasion, a month or two later, the whole fleet of fourteen sail came out for a few hours, but retired at the sight of the British Admiral, though the whole force, which he had with him at the moment, did not exceed nine ships. At last, in the beginning of October, believing that they were in earnest in their desire to put to sea, but equally in earnest in their resolution not to do so as long as he was to be seen, he retired from his station off Cape Sicie to Port Mahon; and when he reckoned that the news of his being at anchor in that harbour had had time to reach Toulon, he again put to sea, taking up his station off Cape St. Sebastian, and posting frigates to watch for a similar movement on the part of the French. He had not long to wait: on the night of the 22nd, the Pomone brought him word that several French line-of-battle ships had already come out, that more were visibly on the move; in short, that there was every appearance of the whole fleet being on the point of sailing. Full of joy at these long-looked-for tidings, Collingwood at once made sail; and the next morning Captain C. Bullen, in the Volontaire, made the signal for the enemy's fleet; he gave chase, but the hopes

thus given were not fully confirmed ; for, as we advanced, it was seen that the hostile squadron consisted of only three sail of the line, and four frigates conveying a flotilla of smaller vessels. They were not worthy of a pursuit by our whole fleet ; so the Admiral contented himself with ordering a frigate or two to attack the convoy ; and with sending Rear-Admiral Martin with a squadron of fast-sailing two-deckers to pursue the men-of-war. Both objects succeeded ; the frigates destroyed several vessels of the convoy ; and, after chasing the larger ships all night and the greater part of the next day, in the evening Martin came up with them at the mouth of the Rhone. He could not venture too near the land in the dark, but kept sufficiently close to prevent the possibility of their escape ; and the next morning he stood in, and was preparing to attack them, when they saved him the trouble by running on shore. Two, the *Robuste*, 80, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Baudin, and the *Lion*, 74, were so hopelessly injured that their own crews set them on fire. One seventy-four and a frigate, which took the ground at the entrance of the harbour of Cette, were in a great degree protected by the land-batteries erected there ; but what contributed still more to their safety, was a gale of wind, which blew so hard for the next few days as to render it impossible for our ships to approach the shore, or assail them otherwise than by a distant fire : and eventually, though greatly damaged, they were got off, and effected their return to Toulon ; when they gave such an account of the vigour with which they had been pursued and overtaken, as to decide M. Ganteaume on not again quitting his harbour while it was watched by so vigilant and energetic an enemy. Having thus dealt with the ships of war, the Admiral now turned his attention to that portion of the convoy which had escaped from the frigates. It had reached the Bay of Rosas, and anchoring under the guns of the citadel of Rosas, Fort Trinidad, and some other heavy

batteries on the shore, all of which had been repaired and strengthened since the French had obtained possession of them, considered itself safe. Collingwood, however, was resolved on their destruction, and sent Captain Hallowell with a small squadron against them. Hallowell soon discovered that, from the shallowness of the water near the shore, they could not be reached by his line-of-battle ships; while the frigates would afford a sufficient mark for the guns of the fortresses, without being able to reply to them so as to produce much effect on their walls. He decided, therefore, on trusting to the boats of the squadron; and, though four of the vessels to be attacked were heavily armed with an average of twelve guns apiece, and, though the French were aware of the impending attack, and had made every possible preparation to baffle and repel it, the skill with which Mr. Tailour, First-lieutenant of the *Tigre*, under whose command the boats were placed, made his arrangements, and the valour of the crews, rendered all resistance unavailing. The men-of-war, in spite of the boarding-nettings which they had fixed on their sides, were all boarded and carried; and, when they had been subdued, the capture of the merchant-vessels was easy. Four were taken, and all the rest were burnt; of the whole squadron which left Toulon, one ship of the line, and the frigate which ran ashore at Cette, alone escaped destruction. A French squadron, which left its harbour as this did, on the anniversary of Trafalgar, had no right, as the Duke of Clarence remarked when congratulating Collingwood on his success, to expect a better fate.

About the same time, the Admiral's watchful activity dealt the French another blow, by expelling them from the Ionian Islands. They had recently placed small garrisons in each; and as, in Collingwood's judgment, the possession of them might enable an enemy to give great annoyance to our trading-vessels in the Mediter-

anean, he proposed to Sir John Stuart, who still commanded our army in Sicily, to make a joint attack upon the enemy's strongholds. That able officer entered into his views; and, at the latter end of September, a small squadron, under the command of Captain Spranger of the *Warrior*, 74, and sixteen hundred men under Brigadier-General Oswald, crossed over from Messina to Zante, which they selected as the first object of attack. It was garrisoned by upwards of three hundred men, who, at first, indeed, made some show of resistance; but presently became sensible of their inability to maintain their position, and capitulated. Cephalonia, which was not quite so strongly fortified, thought it no shame to follow the example. The garrison at Ithaca, before surrendering, fired a few shots, which, however, did no damage; and the only loss which we sustained, was at the island of Cerigo, at the southern extremity of the Morea, where the garrison, though but little exceeding a hundred men, kept up a vigorous fire upon our men for some hours, by which we lost three men killed and wounded; but at last, Lieutenant Willes of the *Spartan*, to which ship the attack of that island was entrusted, silenced the battery which was annoying us; and before night Cerigo also submitted. Several French privateers, two Russian ships of war, and a number of trading-vessels, also fell into our hands. But the great value of the success of the expedition lay in the circumstance that it put an end to all prospect of the French possessing themselves of any stronghold in the Mediterranean beyond their own frontier; which might have been an object of the greatest importance to us, if the prostration of his enemies on land, which, at that moment seemed far from improbable, had left Napoleon at leisure to concentrate his attention on his navy, the arm by which alone he could hope to make any impression on ourselves.

The reduction of these islands, and the destruction of the French squadrons, were, as has been already said, the

last achievement of Lord Collingwood. He had been at sea without a day's rest ever since the renewal of the war, and an uninterrupted confinement on board ship for nearly six years had produced disease under which he had been for some time gradually sinking. In the spring of 1810 he was forced to resign his flag; and, having left the command to Rear-Admiral Martin, on the 8th of March he set sail from Minorca for England. He longed once more to see his country and his family; but that happiness he was not permitted to enjoy. The very next day, as the ship was labouring in a heavy swell, Captain Thomas expressed to the invalid his fears that her motion disturbed him, but was answered too truly, that "he was now in a state in which nothing could disturb him more; he was dying." The same evening he expired peacefully and painlessly, entirely worn out by the fatigue and anxiety of his long and arduous service. He had sacrificed his life for his country as entirely as the man who falls beneath steel or bullet. And he left behind him a name which, even to this day, is held in honour, and spoken of with affection by those who still remember him. He was unfortunate in never having the command of a fleet till the genius of Nelson had left hardly anything for a fleet to do; so that, for our estimate of the skill with which he would have conducted a battle, we are left to conjecture. Still he had shown such consummate courage and skill as captain of a ship in Lord Howe's and Lord St. Vincent's battles, and as leader of his squadron at Trafalgar, such thorough knowledge of his profession, and such general capacity on all occasions, that we may, without any great presumption, entertain the belief that, had it been his lot to have been tried as a commander-in-chief in action, he would have been found as equal to that as he proved to be to every other responsibility that was imposed upon him. He had not, indeed, the intuitive genius of Nelson, nor that ardour of disposition which, if it is not actually genius, is, in the

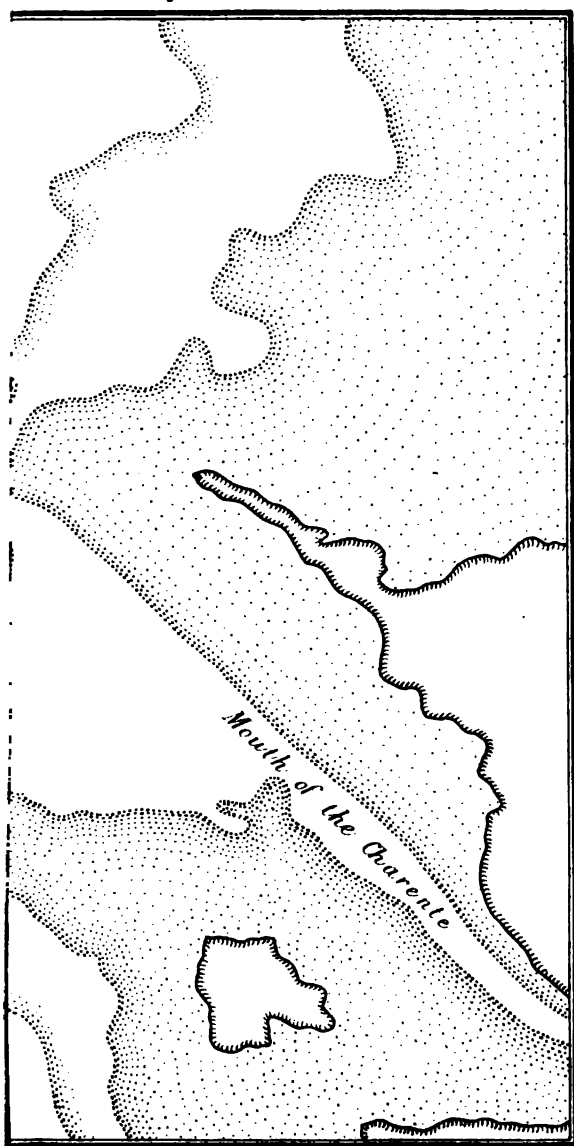
deeds which it enables those who feel it to perform, often almost equivalent to it; which rises under the demands that are made upon it, and annihilates difficulties by ignoring them. But in other and not unimportant qualities he was not unworthy of nor unlike his great leader and friend. In pure patriotism, in imperturbable courage and presence of mind, in kindness of heart, suavity of manners, and unselfish regard for the interests and feelings of those under his orders, he could scarcely be excelled even by him. And, on the whole, the impartial voice of subsequent history may fairly subscribe to the affectionate judgment of his brother seamen and contemporaries, which, after Nelson, ranks him amongst the foremost of those great officers whose talents were brought to light by the Revolutionary war.

While M. Ganteaume lay in Toulon, however inglorious, he was at least safe; but his brother officers out of the Mediterranean received one more lesson, though less forcible than it should have been, that no artificial defences, nor natural difficulties of navigation could protect them in their strongest harbours from British sailors when led by commanders whom they could trust. At the beginning of the year they had squadrons all down their western coast, at Brest, at L'Orient, and at Rochefort, each blockaded by a British force. Lord Gambier was our Commander-in-chief on that station: and, as the largest of the enemy's squadron was at Brest, he took the charge of watching that port upon himself. But in the course of February some heavy gales drove him from his post, and, before he could resume it, M. Villaumez, the French Admiral, had taken advantage of his absence, and had put to sea with eight sail of the line and two frigates. He soon appeared off L'Orient, hoping to unite the ships lying there to his own force; but the line-of-battle ships did not move, and those frigates which came out did so to their own destruction: falling in soon afterwards with Rear-

Admiral Stopford, who, with a squadron of three line-of-battle ships and a frigate, after a short action, drove them all on shore, where they were beaten to pieces by the waves. Proceeding southward Villaumez reached the Isle of Aix, where Stopford, with his small force, could not prevent his entering the roads ; but the Rear-Admiral sent instant intelligence of his arrival to Lord Gambier, who speedily joined him and took the command of the whole fleet. Commodore Beresford, with three more seventy-fours had already arrived, so that there were now eleven British sail of the line collected to blockade the same number of Frenchmen. While the numbers were thus equal, it was quite certain that the French would not come out to fight us ; and, after three or four days' consideration, Lord Gambier wrote to the Admiralty at home to say that it appeared possible to destroy the enemy's fleet by means of fireships ; that the works which had been begun between the isles of Aix and Oleron, to command the channel, were too unfinished to be any hindrance to an attack ; and that, though undoubtedly such an enterprise would be full of danger, there would be no want of men to volunteer for such a service. In point of fact, both Admiral Harvey and Admiral Stopford had offered to undertake it. Before his despatch reached England, the Admiralty had already resolved that such an attack should be made ; had begun to fit out fireships and bombvessels for the service, and had written to Lord Gambier to announce their intention, and to desire him to state what description and amount of force he considered sufficient to ensure success.

The day after the letter to Lord Gambier was despatched, Lord Cochrane brought the *Impérieuse* into Plymouth, and, on hearing of his arrival, the Admiralty sent for him to take his opinion on the subject of the proposed enterprise ; being influenced, apparently, not more by his general reputation for energy, rapidity of decision, and variety of resource, than by the fact that, while in the

*on the Morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1809.*



3 Miles

*M & N Hanhart. lith.*





Pallas, as was mentioned in the last chapter, he had had opportunities of becoming intimately acquainted with the intricacies of the harbour. He had even at that time proposed to Admiral Thornborough a plan for either capturing or destroying the French fleet lying there ; and therefore it was only natural that, when consulted as to the practicability of a similar attempt now, he should unhesitatingly declare in favour of it. But when Lord Mulgrave \* proceeded to propose to him to make the attempt himself, he expressed the greatest reluctance to do so. In his opinion the highest consideration of prudence and delicacy forbade him to allow himself to be sent on such a service to a fleet in which were already many skilful and gallant officers his seniors, who might naturally think that, if such an enterprise were to be undertaken, they had a claim to have it entrusted to themselves, and might consequently look upon him as an intruder. His objections, however, were overruled. The Admiralty insisted on his taking the management of the affair, in terms so pressing that he had no choice but to obey. As far as he himself was concerned, he had paid sufficient respect to the established rights of seniority by the earnestness of his remonstrances, and he could hardly have avoided feeling a secret satisfaction at receiving a commission so important, and in which, if properly equipped and supported, he was so confident of success. As soon as he had undertaken the service, he lost not a moment. It was on the 25th of March that in London he finally signified to the Board of Admiralty his willingness to undertake the service proposed to him ; and on the 3rd of April he anchored the *Impérieuse* in the Basque Roads, where Lord Gambier was lying, just inside the Isle of Aix. It soon appeared that he had not been mistaken in foreboding that his mission would cause great dissatisfaction in the fleet. It was indeed scarcely possible that it should fail to do so ; and unhappily the feeling found a

\* First Lord of the Admiralty in the Duke of Portland's Administration.

mouthpiece in one of the most gallant officers in the service. Rear-Admiral Eliab Harvey, who, as Captain of the *Téméraire*, had followed Nelson into the thickest of the fight at Trafalgar, had his flag flying in the *Tonnant* as second in command. He had already more than once expressed his opinion of the practicability of an attack on the French fleet, and his eagerness to be allowed to make it himself. He had also, more than once, given utterance to opinions but little favourable to the courage of the Commander-in-chief. He now felt Lord Cochrane's mission as a slur upon himself, and upon all the captains in the fleet who were that officer's seniors; and in the first moments of the exasperation caused by the sudden arrival of the *Impérieuse*, he expressed his opinions and feelings to Lord Gambier on his own quarterdeck, with a vehemence of which no officer in Lord Gambier's position could forbear to take notice. So gross, indeed, was his demeanour and language, that the Court-martial, before whom he was brought, and of which no member was ignorant of his eminent professional talents, had no alternative but to sentence him to dismissal from the service.\* It is impossible to deny that he deserved the penalty, heavy as it was: it is equally impossible to avoid sympathising with his feelings of indignation, or, splendid as Lord Cochrane's abilities and achievements were, to forbear condemning the Admiralty for making an appointment so contrary to every rule and practice of the profession, that the officers already serving in Lord Gambier's fleet could not fail to feel aggrieved and disparaged by it; and one which was, moreover, of so anomalous a character, that by it Lord Cochrane was placed under Lord Gambier's command to perform a service which Lord Gambier had not planned, and with which he had nothing to do, except so far as he possessed the power of preventing its accomplishment.

\* He was afterwards restored.

It is quite true that in both our army and navy seniority has been too much regarded, service too little; and if this employment of Lord Cochrane had been designed and announced to be the establishment of a new rule, the inauguration of a new order of things, a historian preferring the welfare of his whole country to the gratification of any individual, however deserving, would rejoice at a circumstance so fraught with practical good; and would cheerfully overlook everything but the benefit derived by the nation at large from the authoritative recognition of the principle that arduous duties, in the successful performance of which the welfare of the entire nation is involved, are to be entrusted to that man alone who is the best qualified to execute them successfully: nor, if such a rule of action were once proclaimed, would any one have a right to profess himself aggrieved, or to look upon himself as unfairly passed over. But the Admiralty of 1809 had no idea of establishing any such rule; and their selection of Lord Cochrane could hardly be looked upon as anything but the result either of pure caprice or of a kind of spasmodic energy, of which even weak men are occasionally capable.

It must be added that Admiral Harvey, though not warranted in imputing general cowardice to Lord Gambier (whose behaviour in Lord Howe's battle had abundantly shown him to be a man devoid of personal fear), had already had ample reason to distrust his competency to lead a fleet to victory; not only in his neglect of the obvious duty of taking soundings of the channel leading to the enemy's fleet, but in the extraordinary change of opinion which he had already acknowledged with respect to the enterprise in contemplation: for, the very day after Lord Cochrane quitted England to undertake it, Lord Gambier had written a second despatch, in a great degree retracting the opinion which he had previously advanced of the practicability of attacking the French fleet, and entirely

contradicting the statement which he had previously made, with perfect correctness, respecting the inefficacy of the works about the Isle of Aix to impede our operations. Admiral Harvey had some reason to say, that, had Nelson been alive, and in Lord Gambier's place, he would have destroyed the French fleet in less time than Lord Gambier took to make up his mind that it could not be attacked.

Even in the moment of his bitterest indignation, Admiral Harvey did ample justice to Lord Cochrane's abilities and previously-earned reputation. And that officer lost no time in justifying the opinion thus expressed of him. The fireships and other vessels which were being prepared in accordance with his plan for the attack, had not yet arrived; but the very day that he himself joined the fleet, he stood in and reconnoitred the two islands of Aix and Oleron, and reported his observations to the Admiral. In one respect his task had been facilitated by measures taken before his arrival by Lord Gambier himself, who, on the 1st, had sent in Captain Irby, in the *Amelia*, 38, to attack some works which the French were constructing on the Boyart shoal, and that officer with his heavy guns, and afterwards with his boats, had completely destroyed them. Lord Cochrane therefore, having now by personal observation ascertained the correctness of the statement which he had made to Lord Mulgrave when in England, that the destruction of the enemy's fleet was certainly practicable, began to urge his commander to lose no time, but, instead of waiting for the fireships from England, to prepare some on the spot. Lord Gambier at once acted upon this suggestion; and the promptitude with which he consented and gave the necessary orders, places his conduct in a more favorable point of view than subsequent passages in the affair, and seems to show that he would have been willing himself to give Lord Cochrane fair play, had not the secret counsels of others,

whose jealousy had been excited by the employment of that officer gradually produced a mischievous effect on his mind, which, always weak, was now rendered more irresolute than ever by a sense of responsibility.

For the next week the whole fleet was busily employed on the fireships ; and especially on the construction of three explosion-vessels, to be made after a plan which Lord Cochrane himself had designed. Having strengthened the floors in every possible manner with beams and wedges, to make the explosion more terrible by the firmness of the resistance, he packed in each a number of casks and puncheons filled with fifteen hundred barrels of powder, binding them together with cables, and filling the interstices with sand ; covering them also with hundreds of shells, and thousands of hand-grenades and rockets. It was not certain that an instantaneous explosion would cause equal destruction with the more lengthened conflagration of a fireship ; but Lord Cochrane, like other great commanders, took into his consideration the moral effect which his actions would produce on the enemy, and justly calculated that the employment of a machine so novel would create a panic in the minds of the French, which would greatly disable them from making a vigorous resistance to the other means of attack. On the 10th of April, just as these preparations were completed, the fireships from England also arrived : and Lord Cochrane instantly urged the Admiral to allow the attack to be made that night. But during the past week the insinuations of Lord Cochrane's enemies had been busy and successful ;\* and

\* In the latter editions of Lord Dundonald's Life ( ' Autobiography of a Seaman ' ), he quotes a letter addressed to him by Admiral F. W. Austen, who was an officer in Lord Gambier's fleet ; and who, while expressing himself anxious " to say as little as possible which may inculpate the conduct of the Commander-in-chief, to whom," he adds, " as you probably know, I owe a debt of gratitude for his kindness to me," nevertheless says, " much of what occurred I attribute to Lord Gambier's being influenced by persons about him, who would have been ready to sacrifice the honour of their country to the gratification of personal dislike to yourself, and the annoyance they felt at a junior

to his great surprise his proposal was now met by a refusal, and by arguments drawn from the danger to which the crews of the fireships would be exposed ; it being Lord Gambier's "duty to take care of the lives of others." What brave enterprises would ever be undertaken, were no consideration but that of their danger to be allowed weight, it is not easy to see. It was in vain that Lord Cochrane represented that he designed himself to precede the fireships in one of his own explosion-vessels. The Admiral's resolution was immovable for that day : though the next morning he changed his mind, not only without any fresh reasons having been brought forward to convince him, but when circumstances were less favourable to the attempt than they had been twenty-four hours before : for the wind had freshened greatly, so that the sea was now very rough ; and the French, warned by the arrival of the fireships in the preceding day, had spent the interval in making skilful preparations to encounter them. Still Lord Cochrane was too glad to obtain permission to make the attempt at all, to take any obstacles into consideration : and the Admiral having placed the fire-ships under his orders, and having given the officers in command of them such instructions as he had suggested, on the evening of the 11th, soon after dark, the squadron quitted the rest of the fleet on its mission of destruction.

Though Lord Gambier's first statement that the batteries on the islands were but little protection to the French fleet, was perfectly correct, it might fairly have been considered sufficiently strong to take care of itself :

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officer being employed in the service." It is impossible for any testimony to be more complete or more emphatic than that which is borne by Admiral Austen and by Captain Hutchinson (Lieutenant of the *Valiant* at the time) to the general correctness of Lord Dundonald's narrative ; on which the author has had no scruple in relying principally in the account he has given of this affair. It must be added that that narrative is also corroborated in its most material points by the evidence of more than one of the captains of ships examined in Lord Gambier's trial. For a fuller detail of the whole transaction the reader must of necessity be referred to Lord Cochrane's own most interesting volumes,

consisting, as it did, of one 120-gun ship, *L'Océan*, Admiral Allemand's flagship, with one 80-gun ship, eight seventy-fours, one 50-gun ship, the *Calcutta* (which had been taken from us by Admiral Villaumez and the *Roche-fort* squadron four years before), and four frigates. This splendid fleet its commander had moored to receive the impending attack in two lines, with the frigates in front as an advanced squadron : and the whole line was covered with a gigantic boom, nearly a mile long, presenting an obtuse angle to the attacking force, at its northern point reaching to within three hundred yards of the Isle of Aix, and firmly secured in its place by chains and anchors of the largest size. This barrier had probably been laid down after Lord Cochrane had made his first reconnaissance, as he appears to have been ignorant of its existence ; but his plans had been so well laid that it proved no obstacle to his success, and disappeared before his explosion vessels without for an instant delaying the progress of a single fireship. In one important respect the details were not carried out as he had arranged them : he had designed that all the boats of the fleet should accompany the fireships, to aid them, if necessary, in taking up their proper positions, and in carrying off the crews ; but for some reason or other, which was never very fully explained, none of them came ; though the French had all their boats out, till the heavy wind which, though fair for us, was foul for them, compelled them to rejoin their ships.

But Lord Cochrane, though disappointed at their absence, did not allow it to delay him. Leaving the *Impérieuse* at the edge of the Boyart shoal, he himself embarked in the largest explosion-vessel, and in her preceded the fireships ; remaining in her till the last moment, and kindling the portfires with his own hand, before he descended into his boat. The fuses had been badly made, for they burnt for scarcely half the time that had



been calculated on ; but before the vessel exploded she had brought up against the boom : and the effect the explosion produced is described by eyewitnesses as similar to or even exceeding that produced by the destruction of *L'Orient* at the Nile. The sea was convulsed as by an earthquake. The boat in which Lord Cochrane himself was, though his men had been pulling hard for seven or eight minutes, was nearly swamped by the whirlpool thus suddenly created. Shells, grenades, and fragments of wreck were hurled to a vast distance, falling among some of the French ships, though half a mile off, and spreading consternation even among those which were out of the reach of the explosion. What was still more important, the mighty boom, which might otherwise have barred our advance altogether, was destroyed. The explosion had shattered the portion immediately in contact with the vessel ; and a gap once made, the upheaving of the sea and the terrible surge, which lasted for some time, shook the beams of which it was composed out of the chains that bound them together, till in a few minutes the whole had fallen to pieces ; and the fireships, as they came down, passed without hindrance over the space where it had been moored. The fireships themselves were but indifferently managed by their commanders. Some were set fire to with such precipitate haste that they were more likely to injure our own ships than those of the enemy : one actually did come down upon the *Impérieuse*, which only saved herself by veering her cable : others passed to the windward of the fleet they were to attack ; of the whole number only four reached the enemy's position, and not one grappled an enemy's ship, or did any real damage. Still their very failure only served to show the soundness of Lord Cochrane's general calculations. For the French, as they saw them bearing down upon them, did not wait to test their power of inflicting injury ; but, thinking that they perhaps might

be not ordinary fireships, but new engines of destruction like that whose portentous explosion they had so recently witnessed, with almost one accord cut or slipped their cables, and drifted before the wind towards their own coast. The next morning, when daylight broke on the two fleets, every French ship but two, the *Foudroyant*, 80, and the *Cassard*, 74, were helplessly aground. Greater confusion has scarcely ever been witnessed: some their crews were deserting; from others men were seen busily engaged in throwing overboard guns and stores, in the faint hope of getting them afloat, and perhaps escaping up the river Charente, whither we should be unable to follow them. Very slight exertion on our part would have sufficed to destroy the whole. They would have been indeed utterly unable to offer the smallest resistance, for as the tide receded they had heeled over towards the land, so as to expose their bottoms to any shot which might be aimed at them, while their broadsides pointed to the sky.

With justifiable pride Lord Cochrane, at daylight on the 12th, gazed on his work. He had regained the *Impérieuse* about midnight, and she, with one or two other frigates, the *Pallas*, which he had so lately commanded, and which was now, to his great comfort, under the command of a gallant friend of his own, Captain George Seymour, being among the number, were the only ships that could discern the condition to which the enemy was reduced. The main body of the fleet was upwards of ten miles off. But the wind was still fair, and the tide on the point of flowing. And as soon as his flags could be seen, Lord Cochrane exultingly signalled to the Commander-in-chief that the enemy's ships were in a position to be easily attacked. The signal was acknowledged, but not answered. He made a second signal, that "all the enemy's ships, except two, were ashore;" a third, that "they could all be destroyed;" a fourth, "that half our fleet could

destroy them;" a fifth, "that the frigates alone could destroy them." Four precious hours had been wasted in making these signals, and in waiting for the Admiral to act upon them; when, as a last resource, seeing that the sacrifice of their stores, coupled with the rising of the tide, was beginning to have effect in moving some of the ships that were aground, Lord Cochrane made a further signal, that "the enemy was preparing to heave off," thinking that this intelligence at least would excite the Admiral to make some effort to prevent their escape; and at the same time he himself dropped down towards them in the *Impérieuse*, to be ready to take his full share in the attack which he thought must now surely be made, and which he knew must prove decisive. For a moment Lord Gambier felt as Lord Cochrane judged that he must feel; he got the whole fleet under weigh, and began to approach the scene of action, which its mere presence was alone wanting to convert into a complete and glorious triumph. But presently the jealous counsels of designing men reasserted their influence over his weak mind. To mar the glory of the officer whom they unjustly regarded as their enemy, he sacrificed his own honour and forgot his duty to his country; and when he had passed over about half the distance which separated his former position from the French fleet, he again came to an anchor, on the childish pretext that the wind and flood-tide together were too strong to make it safe to venture closer to the land, though at that very moment the *Impérieuse* was at last four miles nearer, and visibly in no danger at all.

Her captain was in despair. Undoubtedly, when he had allowed his scruples at undertaking the enterprise pressed upon him to be overruled by Lord Mulgrave, he had entertained a hope of winning high renown by its successful accomplishment. Every part of his professional career warrants the belief that an object still dearer to his heart was to do his country important service; but now

he seemed to see both prospects vanishing together ; the enemy were escaping almost uninjured ; and he himself, instead of being admired as the ingenious contriver and dauntless achiever of their destruction, must expect at least to be derided as a visionary projector of costly but barren schemes ; perhaps to be loaded with the additional odium of having thrust himself into an employment which able officers were already at hand to undertake, who would not have miscarried, as he had done. In his eyes, his duty to himself and to his country called upon him to make one more effort. And with a noble fearlessness of responsibility, he weighed anchor, and, unsupported by a single ship, dropped down towards the enemy to attack their whole fleet with one frigate. The batteries on the Island of Aix opened harmlessly on him as he passed ; but he stood on till he reached the edge of the Palles shoal, on one part or another of which more than half the French vessels were lying, and began at once to attack the Calcutta and the two seventy-fours, Aquilon and Ville de Varsovie, all being still aground ; though the Calcutta was in such a position as to reply vigorously with some of her heavy guns to the fire of the *Impérieuse*. Lord Cochrane's idea in thus advancing unsupported had been to compel his admiral to come to his assistance ; and accordingly he was no sooner engaged, firing his broadside at the Calcutta, his forecastle and bow guns at her companions, than he made a fresh signal that he was in want of aid. His anticipation that the Admiral, when he saw him engaged, would feel it impossible to refrain from supporting him, was not deceived ; Lord Gambier sent down two sail of the line and five frigates.\* It was about half-past three when they reached the scene of action, and, before they arrived, the *Impérieuse* had already subdued

\* *Vaillant*, 74 . . Captain Bligh.      *Emerald*, 38 . Captain Maitland.  
    *Revenge*, 74 . . Captain Kerr.      *Unicorn*, 38 . . Captain Hardyman.  
    *Indefatigable*, 44 Captain Rodd.      *Pallas*, 32 . . Captain G. Seymour.  
    *Aigle*, 38 . . Captain Wolfe.

and taken possession of the Calcutta ; but her crew were so exhausted by their protracted exertions that they gladly relinquished the task of assailing her companions to the new comers. They began to play their part vigorously. Before dusk both the Aquilon and Ville de Varsovie struck ; the crew of the Tonnerre, another 74, set fire to her and escaped in their boats ; and Captain Bligh signalled from the Valiant that there was still light enough to destroy five more ships that evening : in fact the Ocean, 120, Cassard, Regulus, Jemmappe, and Tourville were all aground within reach, and, with the exception of the Cassard, perfectly helpless ; while their crews could be seen to be deserting them. The reply given from the flagship was a signal of recall to the whole squadron.

It was not, however, obeyed at once. For that night our ships remained at their posts ; and after sunset Captain Bligh, with the captains of one or two other ships, went down in a gig to reconnoitre the vessels aground and to ascertain whether it might not be possible to master them with a boat's crew ; but too many of their own boats were moving around them to allow such an attempt to be made. However, at daybreak the next morning, no French boats were to be seen, nor was there the slightest sign of a single man being left on board any one of the stranded ships ; and our officers were preparing to take possession of them, when a fresh signal of recall was made, with which they thought themselves bound to comply, and accordingly they retreated, after setting fire to the ships which they had captured over night ; though one of their number, Captain G. Seymour of the Pallas, still preferred remaining to assist the Impérieuse : and four brigs, the Beagle, 18, Captain Newcombe ; the Encounter, 12, Lieutenant Talbot : the Conflict, 12, Lieutenant Butt ; and the Growler, 12, Lieutenant Crossman, followed the gallant example. Throughout the night Lord Cochrane's own efforts had been chiefly directed to the refitting of the Impérieuse, which had

received considerable damage in her successful encounter with the *Calcutta* on the preceding day ; and, the moment that she was ready for action, he prepared to advance with the brigs to attack, not only the ships aground, but the *Foudroyant*, 80, and the *Casard*, which had got afloat again, and were making sail for the mouth of the Charente. The *Impérieuse*, however, had hardly begun to move when she too was recalled, not only by signal but by a letter which the Admiral despatched in a boat to her captain : and, in spite of Lord Cochrane's entreaties to be allowed to destroy the ships before he withdrew, the signal and letter were repeated in such terms that he could no longer refuse or evade compliance. With a heavy heart he rejoined the Admiral. Seeing him retire, the French crews returned on board their ships and began to warp them off, and the affair was over.

Lord Gambier had thus done what the whole power of France could not have done, he had saved the French fleet from Lord Cochrane. He endeavoured to blind the nation to the true character of his achievement by dwelling in his despatch on the destruction of the four ships that had been burnt, and promising to destroy the rest, if any further attempt to do so should be found practicable ; and, to appease Lord Cochrane himself, by expressing the highest "admiration of his vigorous and gallant attack," . . . . "which could not be exceeded by any feat of valour hitherto achieved in the British navy." In the former object he for a time, to all outward appearance, succeeded. The Duke of Portland's ministry, which was falling into general discredit, thought it their best policy to make the most of what had been done, and announced their intention of proposing a vote of thanks to him in Parliament. As Lord Cochrane made no secret of his resolution to oppose such a vote, the Admiralty appointed a court-martial to inquire into Lord Gambier's conduct ; which, after a display of the most undisguised partiality towards the Ad-

miral, and of enmity to Lord Cochrane, pronounced a formal approbation of his behaviour throughout. Fortified by this judgment, the Ministers succeeded in carrying the vote of thanks ; and Lord Gambier obtained the highest honour that his country could bestow, while Lord Cochrane had a mark set against him at the Admiralty, and, after he resigned the command of the *Impérieuse*, could never again obtain employment. The French at the time formed a different judgment. They gave all the credit for the injury which they had received to Lord Cochrane's energy ; for their unexpected deliverance from further destruction, to Lord Gambier's supineness. Among ourselves, a later generation has unanimously adopted their estimate ; and now ranks Lord Cochrane among the very first of those naval heroes whose professional career is ever to be held up as full of brilliant example to the youthful members of the service ; and Lord Gambier among those whose reputation is best served by silence and oblivion.

The most important result of this enterprise was the effect it produced on the French sailors, who, by the confession of their own writers, were completely disheartened by it : having thus received undeniable proof that their strongest harbours could not protect them from engines of warfare such as the most fertile of their own projectors had never imagined. And before the summer was over, our Ministers made another attempt to carry the war into the enemy's ports, by an attack upon Flushing and Antwerp ; where the French Emperor had latterly been making the most energetic exertions to establish an arsenal which should be equal to our own upon the opposite coast, while, from the intricacy of the navigation at the mouth of the Scheldt, it would be less accessible to attack than repeated experience had convinced him was the case with Boulogne and Cherbourg. He had already a powerful fleet of ten sail of the line there, under Admiral Missiessy, an officer in whom he long reposed great con-

fidence ; and he had constructed a dockyard capable of building twenty ships at a time, and in which many vessels had already been built, and were now nearly ready for sea. To destroy this fleet, with the arsenal, and the fortifications by which both were protected, was the object now aimed at by our Government ; and the force employed was commensurate with the importance of the enterprise. No such armament had ever left our shores. Thirty-seven sail of the line, an entire armada of frigates, sloops, gunboats, bombvessels, with 400 transports, conveyed and escorted a splendid army of 40,000 men to the Belgian coast. The commanders of the fleet were among the most renowned officers that the service could furnish. Sir Richard Strachan, who by his destruction of Dumanoir's squadron had put the finishing stroke to the triumph of Trafalgar, had the chief authority ; the subordinate admirals were Lord Gardner and Sir R. Keats, while the list of captains contained many officers who had already won themselves high reputation : Sir Home Popham, Sir Michael Seymour ; Cockburn, who had been Nelson's captain in the *Minerva* ; Codrington, who had borne his full share in the glories of Trafalgar, and who was destined at a future time to lead a fleet of his own to victory. And, with the exception of the Commander-in-chief himself, the military leaders were worthy of such comrades ; the second in command was Sir John Hope, who in the preceding year had discharged with great skill the arduous duty of embarking the warriors who had conquered at Corunna, and whom, before the end of the war, Wellington pronounced the best officer in the British army ; Lord Paget, known to the present generation as Lord Anglesea, who had also gained unfading laurels in the same campaign, and who was hereafter to reap still more undying glory as the commander of our cavalry on the crowning day of Waterloo ; Graham, who had already dealt the French a heavy blow at Barossa, and who to the end of the war bore no unimportant share, and won no ordinary fame



in the most brilliant victories of the Peninsula, crowning his exploits with the capture of the almost impregnable fortress of St. Sebastian.

That these great officers did not fully succeed in the enterprise on which they were sent, was mainly owing to the incompetency of the General who was set over them all, Lord Chatham ; who, as is generally understood, was the choice, not of the Ministers, but of the King himself ; George III. being, in this instance, misled by his affectionate recollection of the talents and virtues of that officer's illustrious brother, that greatest of British statesmen, William Pitt. Lord Chatham had neither military capacity to qualify him for so arduous a command, nor experience, nor even ordinary activity and energy. The opinion generally formed of him, as it was embodied in an epigram circulated at the time, was that whenever he was not sleeping he was eating, and whenever he was not eating he was sleeping. At all events, it soon became manifest that of any promptitude of action or decision he was absolutely destitute ; and this slowness of his operations prevented the expedition from attaining its desired end in the reduction of Antwerp.

Yet, though marred to this extent, it was not ill-conceived nor useless. It has been misjudged, partly from its failure to achieve all that had been intended ; but much more from the unfortunate attempt to hold Walcheren after the design of attacking Antwerp was renounced. It is to the disease engendered in the army by the prolonged stay among the swamps of that unwholesome island that the condemnation with which the whole enterprise has been so commonly visited is mainly to be attributed. But had the whole armament returned when the commanders agreed in the impracticability of attacking Antwerp, it would have accomplished, if not deeds corresponding to its magnitude and strength, yet a result of no inconsiderable importance in the destruction of Flushing, whose dockyard and arsenal, from their position on the coast,

formed, in the eyes of the French Emperor, an indispensable supplement to the still greater works which he had constructed at Antwerp. At all events, throughout the whole campaign no shortcomings of any kind were imputable to the fleet, which, by the admission of all the generals, did its work in a most masterly manner. It was unfortunate that, owing to the magnitude of the force to be employed, the preparations for the expedition took so long that the summer was far advanced before it started; and in the meantime the French had obtained abundant information respecting it. Yet at first they were not able to interpose even a check to our progress. It was on the 28th of July that the fleet left the Downs; the ships of war with the Commander-in-chief of the army reached the mouth of the Scheldt the same evening, and in the course of the next day and night the whole of the transports also arrived in safety. But the wind was blowing hard from the west; there was a heavy surf, and it seemed impossible to land the troops on the island of Walcheren, except by passing into the Roompot Channel, the strait leading into which had hitherto been considered impracticable for large ships. Fortunately Sir Home Popham, the captain of the *Venerable*, 74, the flagship, was acquainted with the navigation; and undertook to lead the line-of-battle ships to the desired anchorage. On the morning of the 30th he executed his task with the most complete success; and the same afternoon, without losing a moment, Strachan sent in what boats and mortar-vessels were at hand to cover the landing, and began to disembark the troops. Sir Home had already conducted Sir R. Keats's squadron, with Sir John Hope's division of the army, up the East Scheldt; and that general landed one strong body of troops on the large island of South Beveland, and rapidly overran it, taking the town of Goes, and the strong and important fort of Batz at the further end of the island.

Nor were the troops which had landed on Walcheren slow in their first operations. The very next day they took the town of Middleburg, while the fleet attacked the strong fort of Veer. It was well-garrisoned and so heavily armed that it sunk three of our gunboats ; nor was it till Captain Richardson, of the *Cæsar*, landed with a naval brigade, and assailed it with rockets, while General Fraser, with a strong detachment of troops, began to invest it on the landward side, that it surrendered. But now Lord Chatham's slowness began to exert its paralyzing influence. On the 1st of August all the impediments that the enemy could offer to our investment of Flushing were overcome ; General Graham, Lord Paget and Brigadier-General Houston scattering their troops in every direction, driving them from their batteries, and from more than one fortified position. And on the 4th a combined attack by sea and land effected the reduction of the Fort of Rammekins, whose surrender gave us the command of the West Scheldt, and prevented any succours or supplies from being thrown into the town from the mainland. Yet twelve days were suffered to elapse before our own batteries for the attack of the town were completed ; and it was not till the afternoon of the 13th that we fired a gun against it. Then a heavy cannonade was opened upon it both by land and sea ; and even on land the seamen did some service, as the naval brigade not only rendered most effectual assistance in the construction of the different works and in the conveyance of the heavy guns placed in them, but also had the service of one battery of six 24-pounders committed to them, with whose fire they wholly silenced that of the batteries opposed to it. On the 13th the wind was too light to allow Sir R. Strachan to bring his larger ships under the walls as he had intended ; and he was forced to content himself with the employment of two divisions of gunboats and bombvessels, under the command of Captain

Cockburn and Captain E. Owen ; but the next morning a favorable breeze arose, and, having shifted his flag to the St. Domingo, he moved up seven sail of the line to join in the attack ; and, though both the St. Domingo and Lord Gardner's flagship, the Blake, grounded for a short time, the weight of the squadron's fire, added to that of the army, produced so terrible an effect that soon after midnight on the 14th, General Monnet, the governor, surrendered ; the garrison, consisting of nearly 6000 men, became prisoners of war, and upwards of 200 guns, and an enormous mass of ammunition and military stores, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

Before the capture of Flushing another squadron of the fleet had distinguished itself greatly under the command of Lord William Stuart. On our first advance and occupation of Batz, the enemy's fleet had retreated towards Antwerp ; but being fully sensible of the importance of Batz, the French made a vigorous attempt to retake it, and as early as the 5th they sent down a numerous flotilla of gunboats to dislodge the garrison which Sir John Hope had placed on it. The gunboats were repulsed ; and on the 10th of August an attempt to recover the place was made by a more powerful force, consisting of two frigates, one bearing the flag of Vice-Admiral Missiessy himself, thirty brigs, and upwards of twenty gunboats and other armed vessels. On receiving intelligence of this movement, Sir R. Strachan despatched ten frigates up the West Scheldt under Lord William in the Lavinia, 40, to support the military garrison ; and, though the batteries on both sides of the channel poured a heavy fire upon the squadron for nearly two hours, that officer conducted his ships to their destination with no heavier loss than that of ten men killed and nine wounded. Later in the day Sir R. Keats arrived from the East Scheldt, and again the enemy retired, not without the loss of several gunboats ; some of which ran aground and were destroyed,

and some were captured by our gunboats under the eyes of both squadrons.

The eastern division of the fleet continued its operations. Keats with his squadron, in conjunction with a detachment of troops under Lord Rosslyn, on the 15th compelled the surrender of the islands of Schowen and Duiveland, to which Lord Chatham attached great importance on account of the supplies of all kinds of provisions which he expected to be able to draw from them; but Lord Chatham himself neither did nor attempted anything more. Sir Richard Strachan had made every preparation for landing the whole army on the mainland at Sauvliet, a place between Bergen-op-zoom and Antwerp, but was left for some days wholly in the dark as to the intentions of his military colleague. At last, on the 24th, ten days after the fall of Flushing, he found that the General had not made up his mind what he intended to do; but that he was about to hold a council of war. Strachan, with Keats, attended the council the next day, when he found that it had been assembled "more out of respect" \* to the other generals than from any desire to take advice. In fact, Lord Chatham had made up his mind to return to England; and, after the time which had been lost, it is probable that that decision was now defensible on fair military grounds: since the French troops, which had by this time collected at Antwerp and the neighbouring fortresses, amounted to at least thirty-five thousand men; a far larger force than, after deducting the detachments necessary to maintain the occupation of Walcheren and South Beveland, we could possibly bring against them. The Admiral, however, scarcely coincided in the propriety of retreat. With his bombs and gunvessels he had compelled the enemy to relinquish the construction of some batteries which they had commenced: he had offered to co-operate in the reduction of Lillo and Liefkenshoeck,

\* The language of Lord Chatham's despatch.

which he thought quite unable to resist a combined attack ; and when he found that the object of the council was solely to justify the General-in-chief's decision to relinquish the expedition, he and his brother admirals retired. The retreat was decided on, and carried into immediate execution. Two-thirds of the army, with the bulk of the fleet, returned to England ; about twelve thousand men, with a small squadron, remained in occupation of Walcheren. It is not very clear with what object this division remained behind. There was no intention of renewing the attack on Antwerp, nor of permanently retaining such a post as Flushing on the enemy's territory ; but, as has been already mentioned, it was this purposeless and temporary retention of the island which branded the whole expedition with the character of disaster which it has ever since borne. The marshes bred fever and ague among our men to such an extent, that by the middle of September the daily deaths amounted to forty ; and before the end of the autumn the division had more than half its number in the grave or in the hospitals. At last, after two months of pestilence and almost unparalleled mortality, the Ministers sent orders to withdraw the relics of the force ; the troops destroyed the whole of the works at Flushing, the docks, the arsenal, the walls and batteries, and at the beginning of December they returned to England.

Sir James Saumarez still held the command in the Baltic, but the services which he performed were rather solid than showy : with one squadron he shut up a strong military force in the Aland Isles, at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia ; and with the bulk of the fleet he blockaded the Russian fleet at Cronstadt ; but the only aggressive operations which he was able to undertake were the seizure of the little island of Anholt in the Cattegat, and the capture or destruction of a flotilla of gunboats and storeships by the boats of the Implacable,

Melpomene, Bellerophon, and Prometheus under the command of Lieutenant Hornby, who, having displayed a very remarkable degree of gallantry and ability, was unhappily killed by a grape-shot in the moment of victory.

In adding to our Colonial possessions, we had more unequivocal success. On the African Coast, Captain Columbine, of the *Solebay*, 32, combined with Major Maxwell, the Commandant of the British garrison at Goree, in an attack on the French settlement of Senegal, which they reduced without incurring the slightest loss from the enemy, though unhappily a boat's crew was lost at the mouth of the river by the upsetting of the boat in crossing the bar. On the South American coast, Captain Lucas Yeo, of the *Confiance*, 20, being aided by two Portuguese brigs, and a Portuguese regiment of five hundred men, attacked Cayenne. Under his personal superintendence one-half of the Portuguese soldiers, and a body of seamen and marines, landed in the evening of the 6th of January at the mouth of the river Mahurree; the surf was so rough that the boats were dashed to pieces; but the men, not daunted by this misfortune, made their way to the shore, and at daybreak, on the 7th, stormed two batteries, Fort Diamant, protecting the entrance to the river, and Grand Cane, commanding the road to the town of Cayenne. On receiving a preconcerted signal of this success, the rest of the troops also landed; but they had hardly reached the shore, when Captain Yeo, who was acting as commander-in-chief, learnt that General Victor Huques was marching against him with a thousand men. With prompt decision he dismantled Fort Diamant at the entrance of the river; and collected all his force to make a stand at Grand Cane. As a preliminary measure he and his seamen had stormed two batteries a little higher up the river than Fort Diamant which the Portuguese vessels had been unable to subdue. Mean-

time Victor Huques had come down with very superior numbers on the Portuguese troops. But they, under Colonel Manuel Marques, made a gallant resistance, finally repulsed him, and then, being joined by Captain Yeo, they became themselves the assailants; attacking the dwelling house of the French General, which he had turned into a kind of fort, with a small battery on one side, a field-piece or two in front, and a garrison of a hundred soldiers. Captain Yeo would willingly have spared the house, as private property, and summoned the garrison to capitulate; but they replied with so resolute a cannonade from the large guns, and with so heavy a fire of musketry, that Captain Yeo was compelled to charge with pike and bayonet, and soon made himself master of the post. The fighting had now lasted thirty-six hours, and though we and our allies had had the best of it at every point, there were still one or two commanding positions to be occupied; and the ultimate victory depended on which party could seize and maintain them. The British Captain was too quick for the Frenchman; and when he had gained possession of a hill which commanded all the roads, General Victor Huques surrendered; the regular troops, to the number of four hundred, became prisoners; the militia men were disarmed, and thus, with the loss of two men killed, and twenty-two wounded, we wrested from the French their only possession on the South American continent.

A still more important conquest was that of Martinique. It seemed no easy task to subdue an island so valuable, so strongly fortified, and garrisoned: for it was held by nearly five thousand troops; its different fortresses mounted nearly three hundred guns; it was further protected by a small squadron; and it had for its governor M. Villaret Joyeuse, who though, fifteen years before, he had proved unequal to Lord Howe in the conduct of a fleet was an officer of undoubted honour and resolution.



But some despatches, which our cruisers had intercepted, had revealed to the British Governor of Barbadoes the fact that the garrison was not in reality as strong as the mere enumeration of its numbers and its equipment would have led us to believe ; and, acting on this information, Sir Alexander Cochrane, the Admiral on that station, and General Beckwith, the military Commander-in-chief, began at the end of the year 1808 to plan an attack upon it, and at the end of January they sailed from Carlisle Bay to carry their plan into effect. The force they brought with them was sufficient to bear down all resistance ; ten thousand soldiers were escorted by six sail of the line, six frigates, and a numerous flotilla of smaller vessels. But the chief part of the work fell entirely on the army : a brigade of seamen, indeed, under Captain Cockburn, as usual in combined operations of this kind, was of the greatest service in moving heavy guns and constructing batteries, and bore so active a share in the bombardment of Fort Desaix that nearly, if not quite, the whole loss fell upon them ; though even their casualties did not exceed twenty-five killed and wounded. One other service, too, was performed by a naval officer which did not cost a single man : Commander Charles Napier, of the *Recruit*, fancying that he saw indications that Fort Edward was but slightly garrisoned, offered to storm it with a body of sailors or marines ; and, as the proposal was thought too hazardous till more certain information of the strength of the garrison was obtained, he pulled ashore in his gig, scaled the walls, and finding the fort, as he had expected, almost unoccupied, hoisted the British colours on it ; on which General Beckwith at once sent a strong regiment to retain the fort which had been thus fortunately and boldly won. When it was thus held by us, its fire contributed in no small degree to the reduction of Fort Bourbon, and the other strongholds around. But, under every disadvantage, the French made a noble resistance ;

and nothing can better show the strength of the fortifications, or the resolution of both the besiegers and the besieged, than the duration of this attack. From half-past four in the afternoon of the 19th of February, till nine in the morning of the 24th, two-and-forty guns and mortars played upon the walls almost without intermission; and it was not till they were reduced to a heap of ruins, and the powder-magazine was so greatly injured that every shot which fell seemed likely to explode it, that M. Villaret Joyeuse capitulated. In honour of his noble defence, it was agreed that he and his aides-de-camp should not be considered as prisoners, but should be at once set at liberty: while the rest of the garrison was to be conveyed by our ships to Quiberon Bay, and there exchanged for an equal number of Englishmen.

The reduction of Martinique led almost, as a natural consequence, to an attack on the small cluster of islands known as the Saintes, between Dominica and Guadaloupe. They were defended not only by a sufficient garrison, but also by a tolerably strong squadron of three line-of-battle ships and two frigates: for which, or even for a larger force, they, by the form in which they lay, afforded a harbour almost as secure as if it were land-locked; and superior to any such, in having several outlets. They required therefore a combined force of soldiers and sailors to subdue them; and accordingly, in the middle of April, Sir Alexander Cochrane sailed against them with five sail of the line, one or two frigates and smaller vessels, and a division of nearly three thousand troops under Major-General Maitland. We need not enter into the General's operations, which were completely successful, further than to record that he spoke in the warmest terms of the assistance which he had received from Captain Brown of the *Acasta*, and Captain P. Malcolm of the *Narcissus*; but the capture of one of the ships, the *D'Hautpoult*, 74,

demands a more particular mention. As soon as the reduction of the principal island appeared inevitable, the ships of the line took advantage of a night of unusual darkness to endeavour to effect their escape, and late in the evening of the 14th they put to sea; they were seen, however, by the British 18-gun brigs, *Hazard*, *Hawke*, and *Recruit*, which at once began to chase them, and to indicate what was happening by signals to the Admiral. He, in the *Neptune*, 98, accompanied by the *Pompée*, 74, Captain Fahie, at once joined in the chase; but these ships were outsailed by the brigs, and especially by the *Recruit*, still commanded by Captain Charles Napier, who, as has lately been mentioned, had already done good service at Martinique, and who on this occasion laid the foundation of a character for professional skill and gallantry which continued to command the respect and confidence of his brethren of the service till his death. He kept close to the flying squadron during the whole night; and, at daybreak, though both the *Pompée* and the *Neptune* had fallen several miles astern, he opened his fire upon them, in the hope of damaging their rigging so as to give time for the Admiral to come up. A broadside of any one of the French ships would at once have sent the *Recruit* to the bottom; but so admirably did Napier handle her, yawning under the stern and quarter of the rearmost ship, the *D'Hautpoult*, that he gave them scarcely any opportunity of aiming more than their stern-chasers at her; and, in fact, during the whole day sustained no greater damage than three shots in his ship's hull, the loss of one or two ropes, and a wound inflicted on the sergeant of marines. By night the *Pompée* joined him, succeeded in bringing the *D'Hautpoult* to close action, and captured her after an engagement in which the French captain, Armand Le Duc, displayed great skill and most obstinate courage, not surrendering his ship till she was little better than a wreck, and till he

had reduced his antagonist to nearly the same state. Her consorts had continued their flight without stopping to assist her; and, as soon as Captain Napier saw that M. Armand Le Duc was fully engaged, and that they were making off, he sailed in chase after them; signalling to the *Latona* and *Castor* frigates in his rear to join in the pursuit. They, however, were too distant to see the little brig, and followed the *Pompée*, whose guns were a more discernible guide. Captain Napier, having been recently promoted to post-rank, was about to be removed from the *Recruit*; and Sir Alexander Cochrane, as a fit reward for the pre-eminent gallantry which he had displayed on this occasion, gave him the command of the *D'Hautpoult*.

Another brilliant exploit was performed by the same officer whose capture of the *Thétis* in the preceding year had already gained him a high reputation, Captain Michael Seymour. He was still in the *Amethyst*, and attached to the fleet in the Bay of Biscay; and when, in March, Lord Gambier arrived to take the command, he heard so high a character of that frigate, and of the *Emerald*, Captain Maitland, that he gave these captains leave to quit the fleet for a month's cruise to themselves. They were as fortunate as they were active: no week passed without their making at least one valuable prize; and on the morning of the 5th of April, they discovered a vessel far larger than any which they had previously encountered, which on perceiving them at once bore off and attempted to escape. They pursued her; but now it appeared that the *Emerald* was far slower than her consort, since by evening she had fallen so far astern as to be out of sight, while, on the other hand, the French ship had gained so much on the *Amethyst* that she could scarcely be made out; and Captain Seymour became apprehensive that, aided by the darkness of the night, she would get clear off. He, however, under a press of sail held on,

keeping, as nearly as he could judge, in the course in which she was steering when first discovered, though she had diverged from it considerably during the day's chase. And the correctness of his expectations was justified when, two hours later, he again discovered her a few miles on his weather-beam, steering to the westward across his own track. She instantly wore and made all sail to the southward; but the wind, which blew fresh and squally from E.N.E., was more favourable to the *Amethyst* than to herself; and, after a chase of a couple of hours, Captain Seymour had the satisfaction of finding himself within gunshot of her. He at once opened upon her with his bowchase-guns; she returned it with her sternchasers: and for nearly two hours the two vessels maintained a running fight, till, shortly after one o'clock on the morning of the 6th, the British frigate closed with her antagonist and gave her a broadside. The French ship, though armed, as the British crew could count, with more guns, and those too, as was equally plain, of heavier calibre, did not inflict as much damage as she received; and, whenever she had recourse to manœuvres, showed a still greater inferiority. More than once the *Amethyst* raked her severely without exposing herself to any corresponding return, but still the French fought with undiminished resolution; and, though after a time their maintopmast and mizenmast both fell beneath our fire, they continued their resistance till half-past three, nearly four hours after the commencement of the action, then they ceased firing and hauled down their light. They had hardly done so when their mainmast fell; and as the *Amethyst* passed under their stern, with the intention of taking possession of the prize, her mainmast also went overboard, carrying the mizenmast with it. And just at this moment another British frigate was seen approaching, which Captain Seymour by exchange of signals distinguished as the *Arethusa*, Captain R. Mends. The French, eager to give their defeat the appearance of

having been effected by two antagonists, on this re-hoisted their light, and fired two guns, one at each of our ships, and then, when the *Arethusa* replied with about a third of her broadside, again lowered their light and surrendered. The prize was found to be the *Niemen*, a vessel of the same class as the *Thétis*, but with two additional 36 pounder carronades ; her compliment was 339 men, of whom 120 were killed or wounded. So many of the *Amethyst's* men were absent in prizes, that she had only 222 men on board when the action began, and of them she lost eight killed and 37 wounded. The fire of the *Arethusa* had proved harmless to the *Niemen*, and the only sufferer from the single shot which she received was her gallant captain, who was already covered with honourable scars, and who was now struck in the forehead by a splinter, inflicting a deep wound, and permanently injuring his eyesight. Captain Mends very handsomely disclaimed all share in the credit of the *Niemen's* capture ; and Captain Seymour, eminently fortunate in having been throughout the war almost the only officer who had the opportunity of twice triumphing over a superior antagonist, received the reward of his prowess in being raised to a baronetcy.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

1810—1811.

Great French fleet at Toulon — Reduction of Santa Maura — Operations at the Isle of Bourbon — Descent on the Isle of France — Great gallantry of Captain Willoughby — Reduction of the Isle of Bourbon — Loss of Captain Pym's squadron at the Isle of France — Reduction of the Isle of France — Defeat of another French squadron by Captain Schomberg — Reduction of the Dutch islands in the Indian Seas — of Banda Neira — Lieutenant Lyons takes Marrack — Reduction of Java — Destruction of pirates — Exploits of Captain Hoste in the Adriatic — He takes Grao — Defeats a French squadron off Lissa — Exploits of Captain Maxwell — He defeats the French off Lissa — Captain J. Brenton in the Spartan, Captain Duncan, and Captain C. Napier destroy forts and gunboats at Palermo — Exploits of the Rinaldo — The Naiad defeats a French squadron off Boulogne — Capture of gunboats at Madeira — Gallant defence of Anholt — Loss of English ships in a storm in the Baltic — Attack on the Little Belt by an American frigate.

THE destruction of the *Lion* and *Robuste*, in the year of which the last chapter spoke, was the very last instance in which anything of magnitude sufficient to be called a fleet came in contact with an enemy during the whole war. After the lesson thus given them, the French Admirals became more cautious than ever: they had still fleets in the Scheldt, and in the harbours in the Bay of Biscay; but the former never put to sea at all, and the utmost act of boldness in which the latter ventured, was slipping out and stealing from one port to another, like children playing at blindman's buff, whenever our blockading squadrons either had their attention drawn away for a moment, or were driven off their station by the wind. At Toulon the enemy had the greatest force of all, indeed at that arsenal they continued building and launching ships of the greatest magnitude, till at last they had their fleet far superior to

that which we kept in the Mediterranean ; but they never ventured outside their harbour with any more serious purpose than just to exercise their crews a little when we were out of sight. And, though on one occasion Sir Edward Pellew, who in 1811 was appointed to command our Mediterranean fleet, did, after two years' watching, get near enough to a squadron which had peeped out for an afternoon's cruise, to interchange a few shots with some of their nearest ships ; and, though the next year he got still nearer to another squadron, and almost succeeded in cutting off one ship which formed a part of it, yet this was all that even that most active and skilful commander was able to effect. And the service done and the credit deserved by our large fleets during the last four years and a half of the war can only be described by stating that no superiority of number ever emboldened the enemy to face them for a single moment.

Collingwood, as has been mentioned, died in the beginning of 1810; and Sir Charles Cotton, who succeeded him in the command of the Mediterranean fleet, during the brief interval for which he held it till he resigned it to Sir Edward Pellew, followed up his policy by completing the reduction of the last of the Ionian Islands which was left to the enemy, Santa Maura. It yielded to a combined attack of soldiers under Brigadier-General Oswald, and ships under Captain Eyre of the *Magnificent* ; but, though the French garrison made a gallant resistance, they were so completely overpowered by numbers that it seems sufficient to record the fact of their defeat, and the consequent completion of Collingwood's plan.

But while thus debarred from all greater achievements the enterprise and prowess of our countrymen still found or made opportunities of displaying themselves. And if in one conspicuous instance their exuberant gallantry led them into disaster and brief captivity, there is no true Englishman who can feel aught but pride in the contem-



plation of their heroism even when unfortunate, and who would not prefer their boldness, although leading to defeat, to the excessive caution displayed in these later years by the enemy's marine, though the parent of inglorious security.

Among the younger officers of the British navy at this time was Commander Nisbet Willoughby, who had on several occasions exhibited a perfectly reckless contempt of danger, which was at the same time guided, if not moderated, by a thorough knowledge of his profession and great fertility of resource. In the autumn of 1809 this officer, in command of the 18-gun sloop *Otter*, then cruising off the Isle of France, destroyed a large brig, and cut out and carried off a merchant-vessel, though lying under the protection of some strong forts and heavy batteries at Rivi re Noire. And the success of this bold attempt suggested to Commodore Rowley of the *Raisonnable*, 64, our chief officer on that station, the idea of attacking a still more important stronghold of the enemy, the harbour of St. Paul's in the adjacent island of Bourbon. It had long been the chief rendezvous in those regions of the French cruisers, from which to pounce upon our unguarded Indian trading-vessels, and to which to convey their prizes. One frigate of the largest class, *La Caroline*, 46, and one fine corvette, with several Indiamen and smaller vessels which they had captured, were at this moment lying in the harbour: but Rowley did not propose to limit his attack to the shipping, but to direct it also against the fortresses on land, so as to master and destroy them; and with this view he applied to Colonel Keating, the commandant of a military force with which we had recently taken possession of Rodriguez, a small island to the eastward of the Isle of France, for the aid of a few companies of soldiers. Colonel Keating entered warmly into the plan, taking the command of the military portion of the expedition himself; and, on the 20th of September, 1809, the squadron selected by Rowley for

the service, consisting of the *Raisonné*, the *Otter*, the 38-gun frigates *Boadicea*, Captain Hatley, and the 36-gun frigates *Nereide*, Captain Corbett, and *Sirius*, Captain Pym, with a small schooner named the *Wasp*, having on board four companies of soldiers, amounting to nearly 370 men, sailed to the Bay of St. Paul's. To the troops was to be added a naval brigade of nearly 240 seamen and marines, under the command of Captain Willoughby; and, as the utmost rapidity of action was essential to the success of an enterprise whose best chance of success lay in surprising the enemy, the whole of the force intended to act on land was embarked in the *Nereide*. The squadron approached by night, and an hour before daybreak Captain Corbett anchored close to the shore of the island, and landed the soldiers and naval brigade, at a point about seven miles from St. Paul's. The back of the town was in some degree protected by a lake traversed by one or two narrow causeways. Our men instantly began a forced march, in the hope of crossing them before their landing was discovered; and they executed it with such success, that in less than two hours they had passed the causeways, reached the town, and stormed the batteries *Lambousière* and *La Centière*, which commanded that portion of the harbour in which *La Caroline* lay with her consort and their prizes. The ships, seeing what had happened, began to open their fire upon the invaders; but Captain Willoughby quickly brought the guns of the forts which he had captured to bear upon them, and by this time our squadron had worked round, and, entering the harbour, was beginning to add its fire to that which came so unexpectedly from the land. *La Caroline* made a gallant defence, but she was so hemmed in that no efforts which she could make could avail her; soon she and the rest of the shipping hauled down their colours: meanwhile detachments of the troops had reduced the other batteries; and by nine o'clock in the morning, in less than four

hours from the time when the *Nereide* had first approached the shore, the whole place was in our possession, the town, the batteries, the magazines, the garrison, 125 guns, and vast quantities of ammunition, and other military stores; while the entire loss sustained by our troops, both soldiers and sailors, did not amount to 100 men.

The force, however, which the French had in other parts of the island was too strong to allow us to think of permanently retaining the acquisition we had thus gallantly made, so our commanders agreed to destroy such of the magazines and stores of all kinds as were public property, and as they could not remove: all that belonged to individuals they left untouched. And on the 28th they weighed anchor and quitted the island, having inflicted on the French a heavy blow, which, heavy as it was, was only a forerunner of a more decisive one to be delivered at no distant time. The shipping we of course carried off. *La Caroline* was commissioned as a British ship under the name of the *Bourbonnaise*, and, as she was a finer vessel than the *Nereide*, Captain Corbett was removed into her, and Captain Willoughby, having been most deservedly promoted to post-rank, was appointed to the *Nereide*.

Nothing more was done during the winter; but what had been effected at St. Paul's was a sufficient encouragement to do more the following spring: and accordingly, in March, 1810, another squadron was sent from the Cape of Good Hope to act against the two islands, in conjunction with a more powerful land-force than before, which Colonel Keating was a second time expected to bring from Rodriguez. The squadron was placed under the orders of Captain Lambert, in the *Iphigenia*, 36; and consisted, besides that ship, of the *Leopard*, 50, Captain Johnstone; the *Magicienne*, 36, Captain L. Curtis; the *Nereide*, and one or two smaller vessels. Captain Willoughby had the honour of commencing the operations, being sent down to the southern coast of the Isle of France rather to look for anything that might offer than with instructions to attempt

any special enterprise. Such an officer was not likely to be long in finding something to do. As he coasted along, he saw a fine French frigate, which afterwards proved to be the *Astrée*, 40, moored under the batteries of Rivière Noire, in so secure a position that he could effect nothing against her beyond firing a few guns at her by way of a challenge to come out, with which invitation she was not disposed to comply. But when, late at night, on the 30th of April, he reached Jacotel, at the south-eastern point of the island, an achievement presented itself which he conceived to be within his means. At the entrance to the harbour a merchant-vessel of some size lay at anchor; and, as he believed that the approach of the *Nereide* had not been discovered, he conceived the idea that he might get possession of her with his boats. He was aware that two batteries, with the strength of which he was not exactly acquainted, commanded the whole harbour; but he judged that, by a night-attack, he might surprise them, and then that the ship would be wholly at his mercy. And, to ensure success, he resolved to head the enterprise himself. At midnight he embarked fifty seamen and as many marines in the boats, and at once rowed towards the land; but the tide was against him, and the narrow and intricate passage into the harbour was so difficult to find, that it was five in the morning before he entered it. And then he met with an obstacle on which he had not calculated. At the head of the harbour lay *L'Estafette*, a French 4-gun schooner, which at once gave the alarm; and, instead of taking the enemy by surprise, before the boats touched the shore they found both the batteries and several field-pieces playing vigorously on the only landing-place. Nevertheless, disregarding all difficulties, however unexpected, Willoughby dashed on. His plans had been all so fully explained to the officers in command of the different boats, that the moment the men landed they knew what to do: they charged the

nearest battery, carried it by storm, proceeded on to the guardhouse, which was protected by two field-pieces and garrisoned by above a hundred regular soldiers and militia; stormed that, and took the commander prisoner; and then Willoughby prepared to attack the remaining batteries. By this time daylight had revealed to the enemy the smallness of his force; and between him and the battery to be reduced lay the river Jacolet, so deep in ordinary times that none but tall men could cross it without swimming, and swollen at this time to an unusual strength and rapidity by recent rains. His way was further barred by a strong party of militia, with a couple of guns, strongly posted at the foot of a hill; but, having already defeated two such bodies, he was not inclined to turn back before a third. He crossed the river without loss, though not without spoiling the greater part of his ammunition. On reaching the other side, he charged the enemy with the bayonet; and in a few minutes scattered this force also, took their commander prisoner, captured the guns, stormed the battery behind, and, in short, was master of the whole place.

He was beginning without delay to spike the heavy guns and mortars, to carry off the field-pieces and the most valuable portion of the stores which had fallen into his possession, and to destroy the rest, when he was attacked in the rear by the party which he had first defeated, but which had by this time collected considerable reinforcements. He might easily have regained his ship; but, as this enterprise of his was the very first descent that any force of ours had ever made on the island, he thought it worth while to run some personal risk, to teach its defenders what they had to expect if, at any future time, they should be attacked by a more powerful force; and, to make the lesson the more impressive, without replying to their fire, he began to move to the left with the intention of getting round them, and cutting off their retreat. But, as soon as they saw his object, they fled, and so easily

outpaced our tired sailors, that he soon saw there was no chance of overtaking them or bringing them again to action ; and, re-embarking in the boats, he rejoined the ship with his prisoners. The vessel which had tempted him to make the attack proved to be an American, so he was forced to leave her untouched ; but he made prize of *L'Estafette*, and took accurate soundings of the harbour. His prisoners were presently exchanged for a body of thirty-nine English, who were confined at Port Louis ; and he had no loss to lament himself beyond that of one man killed and six men wounded.

A few weeks afterwards, Commodore Rowley arrived in the *Boadicea*, 38, to resume the command, bringing with him also the *Sirius* to replace the *Leopard* ; and having thus four splendid frigates under his command, besides one or two smaller vessels, he prepared to carry out the enterprise against the Isle of Bourbon, or Buonaparte, as it was now called by the French, that had been already concerted with Colonel Keating.

Nearly four thousand of the European and Native troops in the service of the East India Company had been equipped for the expedition ; and in the middle of June he sailed, with the *Boadicea* and *Nereide*, to Rodriguez to escort them back. Before he thus quitted the Isle of France, he had nearly lost his gallant comrade Captain Willoughby, who, a day or two earlier, had been severely wounded by the bursting of a gun, which broke his jaw and shattered his throat so badly that for some days his life was despaired of. Yet so indomitable was Willoughby's spirit, that within three weeks he reported himself fit for service ; and, while his wounds were still only bandaged up, actually took the lead in superintending the disembarkation of the troops. A foul wind delayed the sailing of the expedition from Rodriguez for something more than a week ; but on the 3rd of July the wind shifted, the troops embarked, on the morning of the 7th reached the island, and at once landed almost with-

out opposition. To avoid being entangled in a protracted warfare in the interior of the country, the two commanders had judiciously determined to direct their first attack upon the town of St. Denis, the capital of the island; and the wisdom of this plan was abundantly proved by its complete success. The garrison was so entirely surprised, that it did not wait to be overpowered; but, after a brief resistance at a single outpost, which was carried by our men with very trifling loss, Colonel St. Susanne, the governor of the island, capitulated; and the island, with a vast quantity of stores, and all the shipping in its different harbours, became a British possession.

It was chiefly valuable, however, as leading to a further and more important acquisition, which was not the less creditable to our arms, that some of the first steps towards it were marked by severe and unusual disaster. It was resolved to follow up our capture by the reduction also of the Isle of France, known to us more generally as the Mauritius. And thither the greater part of the naval squadrons repaired a few days after the completion of their task at the Isle of Bourbon. The strongest places on the island now to be attacked were Port Louis, on the western side, and Grand Port, known also as Port Sud-Est, or Port Impérial, on the eastern side: and to the reduction of Grand Port, the capture of a small rocky islet, called Isle de la Passe, about four miles distant, seemed indispensable. It was fortified by three or four well-placed batteries, mounting together nearly twenty guns, and manned by about eighty soldiers. But the boats of the *Sirius* and *Iphigenia* attacked and carried it, though not without severe loss, including that of Lieutenant Norman of the *Sirius*, to whom Captain Pym had entrusted the command of the attack. His fall left others room to distinguish themselves; and, though more than half a century has elapsed since that day, the officer who succeeded him in command of the storming-party, and won his Commander's warm panegyric by the successful courage

which he displayed on this occasion, Lieutenant Chads, of the *Iphigenia*, still survives: now Sir Henry Chads, and long known as the energetic and skilful Captain of the *Excellent*, to whose judicious training the present generation of seamen owe no small portion of their pre-eminent excellence in gunnery.

Captain Pym having gone round to Port Louis, left Captain Willoughby in command at the *Isle de la Passe*: and he, whose energy was not diminished by the fact that his wounds were not yet nearly healed, at once began his operations against the Mauritius itself: making frequent descents on it in her boats; storming a fort which commanded one of the entrances into the harbour of Grand Port; destroying several batteries erected at different points along the coast; and, while thus defeating the French troops, conciliating the peaceful inhabitants of the island by the scrupulous regard which he paid to private property. He had passed three days in enterprises of this kind, and was preparing to continue them on the fourth, when, on the morning of the 20th of August, shortly after he had landed, as usual, he perceived a squadron of French frigates rapidly approaching. He at once returned to the *Nereide*; and, thinking it better that the enemy should enter the harbour of Grand Port than pass on to Port Louis, where they would be joined by another squadron, with whose aid they would easily overpower the British force in front of that place, he hoisted French colours; and, as when we had taken the *Isle de la Passe*, a book of the French signals had been found among the booty, he increased the deception by signalling to them from the island. They bore down, nothing doubting; and, as they drew near, were ascertained to consist of two frigates, a corvette, and two British Indiamen which they had lately captured. As they came on, the corvette *Victor* leading, Willoughby engaged her, and quickly compelled her to strike; but before he could take possession of his prize, the frigates



rescued her, and with them she entered Grand Port harbour in safety. By great good fortune, though the channel was now thus full of enemies, her other boats regained the *Nereide*; and, in spite of the apparently overwhelming superiority of the enemy, Willoughby, supported as he was by the batteries of the *Isle de la Passe*, resolved to hold his ground. He even exchanged broadsides with the largest of the French frigates, assailing them at the same time with some shells from the batteries which soon drove them to seek an anchorage further up the harbour, and he sent to Captain Pym to give him notice of the arrival of these enemies in his neighbourhood, and to request assistance to enable him to attack them. Captain Pym was already aware of his situation: for one of the *Indiamen* which, as has already been mentioned above, were with the French frigates as prizes, had fallen behind the rest of the squadron, and, instead of entering Grand Port with it, had borne away for *Rivière Noire*, where she had fallen in with the *Sirius*, and, even after she had anchored under the batteries, had been gallantly cut out and recaptured by the English boats under Lieutenant Watling. Learning from those on board what a force had gone to the other side of the island, Captain Pym at once hastened thither himself, sending orders to the rest of his squadron to join him with all speed.

Early on the 22nd he joined the *Nereide*, and, after a brief consultation with Captain Willoughby, decided on an immediate attack of the enemy. They were strongly posted, and, as in addition to that advantage, the French nearly doubled our ships in number, it can hardly be reckoned a misfortune that the *Sirius* ran aground at the entrance of the narrow passage into the harbour, and remained there till the next morning: for the next day the *Iphigenia*, 36, Captain Lambert, and the *Magicienne*, 36, Captain L. Curtis, joined; and when, in the afternoon of the following day, the attack was resumed, it was with a

force which afforded a much better prospect of success. It was attended, however, with unusual disaster. The enemy had greatly strengthened their position since the previous day, both by the erection of heavy batteries on land, and by removing their ships further up the harbour; but it was not to these operations, judicious as they were, that they owed their safety, so much as to the exceeding intricacy of the navigation, the channel being full of shoals and coral-rocks, which both hindered our entrance into the harbour and greatly hampered the movements of those of our ships which made their way in. The two squadrons being now equal in number, Captain Pym allotted one of the French ships to each of his own as her opponent, and on the afternoon of the 22nd was bravely leading the way in, when the *Sirius* again grounded on a small shoal. The *Magicienne* did the same. The *Iphigenia* reached her appointed antagonist *La Minerve*, 40, which, after sustaining three broadsides, cut her cable and ran aground. The *Nereide* had taken the place intended for the *Sirius*, and engaged *La Bellone*, 40, till she followed her consort's example, cut her cable and ran ashore, but in such a position that her guns, like those of *La Minerve*, still commanded the harbour. Captain Lambert found his advance barred by another shoal, which lay between him and the enemy in their new position; and consequently the *Nereide* was the only one of the frigates which was able to continue the engagement. Upon her the whole French squadron now directed their fire. It was vigorously returned; and never had Captain Willoughby, nor any other officer, displayed more heroic courage and fortitude. He was fearfully wounded: one of his eyes was torn from the socket by a splinter. Still he remained on deck and gave his orders, till there was hardly a man unhurt in the ship to receive them. At last, when he had for five hours and a half maintained a conflict with four antagonists, two of which were far more

powerful vessels than his own ship, when nearly a hundred of his crew had been killed, and a still greater number wounded, he hauled down his colours. The *Sirius* and the *Magicienne* did not, indeed fall into the hands of the enemy; but they were equally lost to us. It was found impossible to get them afloat; and Captain Pym, having put their crews on board the *Iphigenia*, set fire to them, and blew them up with their colours standing.

Our misfortunes were not yet ended. Captain Lambert's hopes were now limited to warping the *Iphigenia* safely out of the harbour, and with her securing the *Isle de la Passe* till reinforcements could arrive; but from foulness of wind, the loss of anchors, and other accidents, he could make but slow progress; before he could reach the island, a second squadron of French frigates hove in sight, a force which it was impossible for him to resist; and, after a short negociation, he surrendered both the ship and the island, on condition that his crew and the garrison should not be detained as prisoners, but should be conveyed to some place in the British dominions, not to serve again in the war until they should be regularly exchanged.

We had thus met with a great disaster: it remained to retrieve and avenge it. And for this our officers on the station took instant and effectual steps. When Captain Pym set fire to the *Sirius* and *Magicienne* he sent his launch to convey to Commodore Rowley in the *Boadicea* the intelligence of the events that had taken place. The boat fell in with the Commodore the next day; and that officer, immediately on receiving the news, repaired to Grand Port. But before he reached it the *Iphigenia* had also been taken, and he retired to the *Isle of Bourbon*, sending out one or two small vessels to give notice to any British ships which they might meet of the calamities that had befallen our arms, and of his own weakness. His messengers fell in with one ship, *L'Africaine*, 38, in

which Captain Corbett, having conducted *La Bourbonnaise* safely to England, was returning to rejoin him. She found him at sea. He had been lying at St. Paul's with the *Otter* sloop and the *Staunch*, a small gunbrig, when, on the 12th of September, a fortnight after the defeat of Captain Pym's squadron, two French frigates, the *Iphigenia*, so recently captured from us, and *L'Astrée*, one of those to which she had yielded, appeared off the harbour, and he thought his honour concerned in sailing out with his two little consorts to attack them. His expectation of a favorable issue was converted into entire confidence when he was joined by the *Africaine*; but the very excellence of that frigate led to the disappointment of his hopes, and to her own capture. It was about three in the afternoon when she joined the *Commodore*; and, accompanying him in chase of the enemy, she so far outsailed him that when, after a pursuit of twelve hours, she came up with them, the *Boadicea* was several miles astern. Had not the enemy by this time got so near Port Louis that two or three hours more would have sufficed to place them in safety, Captain Corbett would have contented himself with attempting to detain them by a distant cannonade till the *Boadicea* could join him; but the fear lest they should escape made him renounce that plan, and he resolved on engaging them at once, while they, being two to one, had no reluctance to an immediate action on these terms. They were bravely and skilfully fought, and their well-directed fire speedily cut the *Africaine's* rigging to pieces, carrying away her jibboom, her fore and mizen topmast, shattering her mainmast and foremast, and mortally wounding Captain Corbett and the two senior lieutenants. Left almost without a commander, her crew still fought her with unabated resolution; and it was not till more than half their number had been killed or wounded, and till their ammunition was so nearly expended that they had but fifty round-shot left, that they struck their colours. When day broke, the *Commodore*, still at least four miles astern,

discovered the sad fact that the *Africaine* too was added to the list of the enemy's prizes ; but still he held on with the *Otter* and *Staunch*, hoping to find some opportunity of attacking the victors with advantage, and presently his perseverance was rewarded by seeing all the masts of the *Africaine* fall (a sufficient proof how gallantly she had been defended). The *Iphigenia* and *Astrée* had lost too many men, and exhausted their ammunition too nearly, to be inclined for a contest with a fresh enemy ; they retreated, and the prize crew, which consisted of no more than nine men, had no resource but to haul down their French colours almost as soon as they had hoisted them.

Fortune had another triumph of the same kind in store for the energetic Commodore. He was still cruising off Port Louis, hoping the *Astrée* and her consort might think fit to come out and fight him, when, five days after his recapture of the *Africaine*, he perceived another squadron of three sail coming towards him. He advanced to meet them, and as he drew near he perceived them to be a French frigate, which had lost her topmasts, and a large corvette with a British frigate in tow as her prize. They were *La Vénus*, 44, and the *Victor*, 18, and the prize was the *Ceylon*, 40, having on board Major-General Abercromby and his staff, which the Frenchmen had captured that very morning. The *Ceylon*, which had originally been built for a trading vessel, was but little able to cope with such antagonists ; but she had made so gallant a resistance that she had shot away the mizenmast, the fore and main topmasts of *La Vénus*, so that the latter had but little chance when assailed by the *Boadicea*, and after a short resistance she struck her colours, while the *Otter* had even less trouble in gaining possession of the *Ceylon* : the *Victor*, being far speedier than the *Staunch*, escaped unmolested.

Commodore Rowley now returned to St. Paul's, unable to strike any further blow himself, but confident that the disaster of Captain Pym's squadron, as soon as it should be known at the Cape of Good Hope, would call forth

exertions on the part of our fleet on that station, which would put an end to the exultation of the enemy. He was not deceived. The commander-in-chief at the Cape at that time was Admiral A. Bertie, and he at once made preparations not only for retrieving the disaster which we had suffered, but for preventing its recurrence, by seizing the entire island of the Mauritius, and thus permanently depriving the French of that stronghold, their possession of which had long been most injurious to our trade. General Abercromby had returned to Cape Town, and with him the Admiral now concerted an expedition on a scale which would render all resistance impossible. While it was preparing, he went himself to the Mauritius to reconnoitre; and, having satisfied himself of the strength and condition of the defences of the island, he departed, leaving Rowley an additional frigate, the *Nisus*, 38, Captain Beaver, to which he subsequently added the *Cornelia*, 32, Captain Edgele, and the *Hesper* sloop; with these, his own ship, and *La Vénus*, which he had refitted, and renamed as the *Nereide*, in honour of Captain Willoughby and his old ship, Rowley blockaded Port Louis, though a squadron larger than his own was in the harbour, and prevented the escape of a single vessel, till at the end of November Admiral Bertie returned with the greater part of the force of both kinds which he had been preparing. One division of soldiers from the Cape did not indeed arrive in time, but those which had been sent from India amounted to nearly 10,000 men, and these were with reason looked upon as abundantly sufficient. The expedition left Rodriguez on the 22nd of November, and reached its destination on the 29th, the transports and the men-of-war which escorted them forming a fleet little short of 70 sail. No opposition could be offered to such a force, a great portion of the army was disembarked the same day at Grande Baye, a place about twelve miles from Port Louis, where the shelving shore afforded a favorable

landing-place, and, after one or two trifling skirmishes, on the 2nd of December, the governor of the island, General Decaen, proposed to capitulate. The terms were soon adjusted, the next day 1500 regular French troops laid down their arms on condition of being conveyed to France; the crews of the different ships were granted the same exemption from captivity, but the ships themselves, six frigates, among which were our own *Iphigenia* and *Nereide*, two or three smaller ships of war, several gunboats, and upwards of thirty merchant vessels, were surrendered. The English prisoners of war were of course released, and among them were found not only the gallant Captains Pym, Willoughby, Curtis, and their men, but also Captain Lambert and the crew of the *Iphigenia*, who, according to the terms in which they had surrendered, ought to have been sent to some British territory full two months before. General Decaen had, however, scarcely had any means of fulfilling that engagement, and its non-fulfilment was fortunate for his prisoners, since they now recovered their freedom, without being for a moment restrained from a return to active service.

Nor was the naval loss to the French limited to the capture of the ships already at Port Louis. Before the news could reach France, another squadron of three fine 40-gun frigates, *La Renommée*, bearing the broad pendant of Commodore Roquebert, *La Clorinde*, and *La Néréide*, had sailed from Brest with reinforcement and supplies for the garrison. They reached the Isle de la Passe, the first week in May, 1811, and had scarcely ascertained that the colony was in our possession, when the British 36-gun frigates *Phœbe*, Captain Hillyar, and *Galatea*, Captain Losack, with the 16-gun brig *Racehorse*, were seen approaching. The French retreated, and we chased; but the next day, perceiving their manifest superiority to our squadron, the enemy bore up, as if desirous of coming to action. Captain Hillyar, though he would not decline an

engagement, was not in a hurry to bring it on, since, on first discovering the French squadron he had sent intelligence of their presence to Port Louis, where Captain Schomberg was lying with the *Astræa*, another 36-gun frigate; and he was now in hourly expectation of her arrival, which would put him on an equality with the enemy. The next day the *Astræa* did join, and Captain Schomberg, as senior officer, took the command. But by this time the *Phœbe* had lost sight of the French, and before again proceeding in search of them, he found it necessary to return and take in some supplies at Port Louis.

After a delay of two or three days for this purpose, Captain Schomberg and his comrades again set sail, and steered directly for Madagascar, on the eastern coast of which was a small town called Tamatave, where the French had had a settlement, from which three months before we had expelled them, and which we had since occupied with a company belonging to one of the regiments at the Cape. M. Roquebert, who probably had no previous suspicion of what had thus happened, arrived at Tamatave on the 19th of May, and easily compelled our handful of men to surrender; but he had scarcely recovered the possession of the place, when at daybreak the next morning Schomberg with his squadron hove in sight, and, at the sight of the foe whom he was seeking, joyfully pressed forward, while the French Commodore, on his part, displayed equal willingness to try the fortune of a battle. Throughout the whole war there was no instance of combatants being more equally matched. Including their carronades, each frigate, French as well as English, carried forty-two guns, of calibre so nearly identical that the difference in weight of metal was only four pounds, and that was in our favour; but this almost imperceptible advantage was more than counterbalanced by the superior size of the French frigates and the superior numbers of their crews, now of more than



usual strength, from the addition of the soldiers, whom as has been already mentioned, they had on board.

The manœuvres of the enemy to gain the wind prevented Captain Schomberg from getting within gunshot of them till late in the afternoon, and then the distant cannonade which the French ships opened upon him, so dissipated the little wind that was blowing previously, that three hours more elapsed before he could bring them to that close action on which English captains at all times prefer to rely. As the two squadrons neared each other, the *Clorinde* and *Renommée*, bringing up a light breeze with them, were able for a time to rake the *Phœbe* and *Galatea*, before the British frigates could bring their guns to bear at all on their assailants ; but presently the *Phœbe* too caught the breeze, and being thus enabled to bring the *Nereide* to close action, attacked her with such vigour that in half an hour she was completely disabled, and was compelled to summon her consorts to her assistance. As they came up the *Phœbe* fell back, and Captain Schomberg was preparing to bear down upon the collected Frenchmen with his own squadron in compact order, when the effects of the raking fire to which the *Galatea* had been exposed, suddenly showed themselves in her fore and mizen topmasts falling ; and for the time that frigate was disabled from advancing to renew the action. The *Phœbe*, however, though she also had suffered severely, was still perfectly manageable, and, with her and the little *Racehorse*, Captain Schomberg still determined to close with the enemy. He himself singled out the French Commodore as his opponent, and in less than half an hour he compelled the *Renommée* to haul down her colours. The *Phœbe* was equally successful with the *Clorinde* ; but the French Captain perceiving the English frigate to be too much crippled to pursue him, (as she well might be after having thus been engaged with the whole squadron), made sail to escape, in spite of his previous surrender ; and though Captain Schomberg pursued

him in the *Astræa*, he failed to overtake him. After a chase of three or four hours, he returned to rejoin his squadron and to secure his own prize. She had suffered severely, having lost her captain, who was slain, and having nearly 150 of her crew killed or wounded. And the loss of men on board our own ships had also been severe, the *Astræa* and *Phœbe* having between them lost forty-nine men, while more than that number had fallen in the *Galatea* alone.

As soon as Captain Schomberg had refitted his ships, he started for Tamatave to recover that settlement; and on his arrival there, on the 29th, he had the satisfaction of finding the *Nereide*, with which he had been so lately engaged, anchored in the road. She had completely repaired her damages, and the defences on land had been greatly strengthened since the French had had possession of the place. They were busily employed in the erection of additional batteries, but these fortunately were not yet completed when the British squadron arrived. As it was, however, the fort which commanded the anchorage was so powerful, and so well placed, and the frigate was so well protected, not only by the guns on shore but by some reefs in front of her, that the British Captain was forced to prefer negotiation to open attack; and only procured the unresisting surrender of the ship and the fort, by promising the crew and garrison their liberty and a safe conveyance to their own country.

Of French prisoners we had, however, more than enough; and the recapture of the settlement completed the expulsion of the French from the Indian seas. It remained to reduce the colonies in the same region belonging to Holland, which, after having been for a short time permitted a nominal independence under the kingly authority of Louis Buonaparte, was in 1810 formally annexed to France: and equally in both conditions, as kingdom and as province, laid its revenues at

the entire disposal of the French Emperor. The first efforts with this object were made in the spring of 1810, when Admiral Drury, who had succeeded Sir E. Pellew on the Indian station, sent Captain Tucker with a small squadron consisting of his own frigate, the *Dover*, 38; the *Cornwallis*, 44, Captain Montagu; and the 18-gun sloop *Samarang*, Captain Spencer, against Amboyna and the Moluccas. They were aided by a small land-force drawn from the East India Company's regiments at Madras under the command of Major Court. And on the 9th of February the expedition, after capturing three small men-of-war mounting forty-four guns between them on its way, entered the harbour of Amboyna, and began to reconnoitre the defences, which had been greatly strengthened since the restoration of the island by us at the peace of Amiens. Besides two strong batteries on shore, one had been constructed on piles running out a considerable distance into the sea; and the whole were adequately manned by a garrison of upwards of thirteen hundred men. They proved, however, wholly unable to resist our attack. The soldiers, with a naval brigade of seamen and marines, landed, and, having dragged some guns up the heights which commanded the town on the landward side, attacked the batteries in the rear, while the ships anchoring in front opened a heavy cannonade from the sea; and, though they were answered for some hours with a vigorous and well-sustained fire of red-hot shot and shells from the forts, yet our guns were served with an energy and skill so superior that the Dutch evacuated their batteries nearest to the shore in the night; the next morning the Governor capitulated, and we obtained possession of the island, the military stores, and the shipping in the harbour, with a loss in killed and wounded of only thirteen men. In the course of the spring several other of the neighbouring islands submitted to Captain Tucker without resistance. And before the

end of the summer another squadron, under Captain Cole, of the *Caroline*, 36, consisting, besides that vessel, of the *Remonstrance*, 38, Captain Foote, and the 18-gun sloop *Barracouta*, Lieutenant Kenah, achieved a more difficult and also more valuable conquest, in the reduction of Banda, the chief of the Spice Islands in the Molucca seas; which, in consequence of the shoals and reefs, and dangerous currents with which nature had surrounded it, and of the numerous and well-armed forts which the art of the engineer had erected on its commanding heights, was generally looked upon as impregnable. Captain Cole had on board his ships also a small detachment of military, but still his force was so disproportioned to the reputation for strength which Banda enjoyed, that Admiral Drury left it entirely to his discretion to make or to refrain from the attack when he should have obtained more precise information of the defences of the island. What he did obtain was not of a very encouraging character; for on his way he fell in with the *Samarang* on her return from Amboyna, and learnt from Captain Spencer that the Dutch had upwards of seven hundred regular troops, besides militia, on the island. But, as the proposal to attack it had originally come from himself he would not draw back; and, hastening on with all the speed consistent with the caution necessary in the navigation of such little known and dangerous waters, on the 8th of August he came in sight of the object of his enterprise. His approach had been discovered while he was still at a distance, and up to midnight the weather was so fine and bright that an attack by boats, according to Captain Cole's original plan, seemed hopeless, as the boats would in all probability be destroyed by the batteries before they could reach the land. But at two the next morning dark clouds began to overspread the sky, heavy squalls of wind to sweep the sea; and Captain Cole, trusting that the sudden change in the weather would disarm the

watchfulness of the garrison would no longer believe in the possibility of a boat attack that night, decided on making the attempt at once. His force consisted of something under four hundred men ; and he headed it himself, selecting as his point of attack a spot within a hundred yards of one of the most formidable batteries, judging that there the enemy would be less on their guard. His daring calculations were realised. Half of the boats, indeed, missed their way in the dark, but the remainder made good their landing without opposition ; and, as they touched the shore, the weather became so much worse with driving rain that a party under Lieutenant Kenah was able to surprise one battery, and master it, making prisoners of the guard without firing a single gun. They also procured a native guide to the principal stronghold, the castle of Belgica ; but by this time the alarm had been given in the town, and the bugle was loudly rousing the garrison to arms. Trusting, however, to the zeal of his followers, Cole pressed on : as his men placed their scaling-ladders against the castle walls, the sentries began to fire their muskets, and the gunners on the ramparts their heavy cannon, but their aim was unsteady and inaccurate ; and our men, almost uninjured, scaled first the outer then the inner works, and, when these were surmounted, half the Dutch garrison fled through the gate, leaving their colonel among the slain, and the rest of their comrades prisoners in our hands.

It remained to subdue a second castle of great strength, Fort Nassau, and the sea batteries which were already pouring a heavy cannonade upon our ships. But they were all so fully commanded by Castle Belgica, that Captain Cole thought he could compel them to surrender without having recourse to an assault, in which he must inevitably have lost many valuable lives. Accordingly he now sent Mr. Kenah with a flag of truce to the Governor, requiring his instant submission, and threatening, in case

of refusal, to storm Nassau, and to destroy the town with the cannon of Belgica; and he supported the menace by firing a gun from that castle into one of the sea-batteries as a proof how completely it lay in his power to do what he threatened. His summons was obeyed. Seven hundred regular troops, and a still greater number of militia, laid down their arms; and Captain Cole, when he took possession of the place, found that its strength had been in no respect overrated, since the different forts and batteries mounted upwards of one hundred and twenty guns.

It was not among the least of the advantages derived from the reduction of these islands that it deprived the pirates, who infested those seas, of their accustomed refuge, and thus made it easier for our ships to overtake and crush them. The Malay pirates had long been notorious for their lawlessness, their barbarity, and their success; and of late numbers of French boats, whose crews were little better, had hovered also about the Java sea, finding an easy and safe shelter from pursuit in the creeks and inlets which abounded on the different coasts; but now they were driven into the open sea, and Captain Harris and Captain Maunsel, of the *Sir Francis Drake* frigate and *Procris* sloop, almost annihilated them. Their vessels were gunboats of unusual size, each armed with two guns of very large calibre, for the most part felucca-rigged, and having in addition no less than sixty oars; but in the course of the spring and summer of 1811 our two ships destroyed upwards of twenty of these vessels, and for some time our merchantmen enjoyed a comparative immunity from the danger which above all others had most impeded commercial enterprise in those regions.

The first anniversary of the fall of Banda inflicted on the Dutch a still heavier blow in the loss of Batavia, the capital of Java, which in a few weeks brought after

it the submission of the whole island. The conquest of so large and powerful a territory, exceeding Ireland in size, and defended by numerous military garrisons, was an enterprise for an army rather than for a fleet; and accordingly, when Lord Minto, then Governor-General of India; had resolved on attempting it, he despatched from the two Presidencies of Madras and Bengal a land-force of nearly twelve hundred men under Sir Samuel Achmuty; and the duties of the fleet were in most instances confined to those of subordinate co-operation. It will be presently seen that, when occasion offered, this co-operation was gallantly and effectively given; and one very brilliant exploit, which deserved to be hailed as an omen of the success of the whole expedition, was performed entirely by sailors, under a very young officer, Lieutenant Lyons, who, living to attain the highest rank in his profession, in the last of our European wars, as Commander-in-chief, led our fleet in its last campaign in the Black Sea. gallantly supporting and aiding our army through its painful trials, till the Czar was humbled by the conquest of the almost impregnable Sebastopol which Admiral Lyons had so long and so vigilantly blockaded.

Our commanders had learnt that some French regiments were on their way to reinforce the Javanese army, and, as the most favourable spot for their landing was the harbour of Marrack, near the western end of the island, Captain Sayer of the *Leda*, 36, who, till the arrival of the fleet under Rear-Admiral Stopford, commanded the squadron cruising in that neighbourhood, planned an attack against it; but, just as the boats intended for the enterprise were about to leave the ships, he learnt that a fort of unusual strength which commanded the anchorage, and which was already amply garrisoned, had received a strong reinforcement. On the receipt of this intelligence he abandoned the idea of attacking it, and contented himself with sending

Lieutenant Lyons, on the 24th of July, with a couple of boats to put ashore some prisoners, for whom he had no room in his ship, and also to gather what information he could obtain about the movements of the enemy's troops, and the general condition of the island. The prisoners were easily landed, and the Lieutenant learnt that the Dutch officers were wholly ignorant of the impending attack, or at least of its being so near at hand. And therefore, as our main attempt was to be made much further to the eastward, he thought that an instant assault on Fort Marrack might perplex the enemy, leading them to move their troops to that end of the island, where they would be of no use. The men under his orders were only thirty-four, but they all showed the greatest alacrity on hearing his proposal to attack a force which, if the report that had reached Captain Sayer were true, was at least ten times their number; and he, having made all his arrangements with the coolness of a veteran commander, brought up the boats at sunset behind a projecting point of land which hid them from the view of the sentinels on shore, and there waited patiently for the setting of the moon to give the signal for advance.

Soon after midnight the moon went down. The boats rounded the point, but had scarcely done so when a sharp volley of musketry, which was poured upon them, showed them that they could not trust for their success to a surprise. One of the Dutch batteries came down to the water's edge, and for this the boats were now steered, and through a heavy surf were run aground under the embrasures of the lower tier of guns. The walls were scaled, the gunners were cut down, some in the very act of applying their matches to the cannon, and the battery was won. Re-forming his men, the Lieutenant led them to storm a higher battery, which commanded it. Having carried that, he moved up the hill, where one strong division of the garrison was drawn



up in battle-array ; he charged them, shouting out that he had four hundred men, and would give no quarter ; without stopping to count their assailants, the Dutch fled ; but there still remained a fort in the rear, which, with two gunboats in the harbour, began to open a lively fire. This fort, however, lay too far back from the shore for Lyons to venture to attack it : so, contenting himself with the success he had already gained, he now led his men back to spike the guns and destroy the batteries which he had won. It was a task requiring time, since the guns to be disabled amounted to no fewer than fifty-four ; but at last it was completed ; and the Lieutenant, expecting a further attack, and being encumbered with four wounded men (that being the extent of his loss), decided on returning to his ship. To his great mortification, when he reached the shore he found one of his boats bilged, and thrown by the surf too high on the land to make it possible for him to get her afloat again. His only resource was to embark all his men in the cutter ; and he was in some degree consoled for the loss of the launch by the evidence which his departure afforded the enemy of the strength of the force by which they had been beaten : when the men, who were thus carrying off their colours, who had taken and destroyed two batteries armed with upwards of fifty guns, and had disgracefully routed a well-posted body of infantry, could all be conveyed away in a single small boat.

That day week the army was successfully landed in the neighbourhood of Batavia, which, on the 8th of August, 1811, surrendered without resistance. On the 10th a strong position at Wettervede was stormed by Colonel Gillespie, an officer who before that day had earned a brilliant reputation in Indian warfare. But after this success our further progress became very difficult, since the enemy, greatly superior in numbers to our army, had intrenched themselves in a most formidable position ; protected on one flank by a large deep river, on the other by

an artificial watercourse equally unfordable, while their front was fortified by a deep trench and a strong palisade, and seven redoubts and many batteries mounted with heavy cannon bristled within their lines. It was now that the aid of the fleet became useful. General Achmuty could not advance to the attack till he had silenced the enemy's batteries with his own ; and Admiral Stopford landed five hundred men from the ships, under Captain Sayer's command, who not only constructed but manned the works required. By the morning of the 24th they were fit for service ; and, though they consisted only of twenty 18-pounders, while the enemy's guns were thirty-four in number, and for the most part of far heavier calibre, by the end of the second day our seamen had almost silenced the Dutch fire ; and the next morning the army attacked the enemy's position at all points, and carried it with great slaughter. Above a thousand of the Dutch were slain ; more than five thousand were taken prisoners. Their commander, General Jansens, fled to a distant part of the island ; but General Achmuty pressed him vigorously, and by the middle of September had driven him more than half the length of the island. Exhausted, and hopeless of being able to make any further resistance, the Dutchman at last surrendered, and on the 19th signed a capitulation, by which the whole of that splendid island and its dependencies were formally surrendered to Great Britain.

While our fleets of line-of-battle ships could find nothing to do but watch an enemy who would not come out to fight them, our frigate-squadrons were more fortunate in the European portion of the Mediterranean. Napoleon kept his own frigates constantly on the move in connection with the various military operations of himself and his lieutenants ; and their activity led to a number of engagements, in which the French thought themselves sufficiently successful when they escaped capture. Among the most

active of our commanders of these squadrons was Captain Hoste, who had entered the navy under Nelson's protection, and who, while little more than a boy, had displayed an amount of energy and professional talent that had won for him the marked favour of the great Admiral, who, to his other qualities for high command, added an almost intuitive discernment of character. Collingwood soon learnt to entertain an equally high opinion of him ; and when, in August, 1809, the boats of his frigate, the *Amphion*, 32, went in under a battery erected at the mouth of the Piave and destroyed six Venetian gunboats and a number of provision-vessels, in sight of the Italian fleet, lying at Venice, Collingwood, in reporting the exploit, with deserved panegyric, to the Admiralty, added the flattering remark, that " the *Amphion's* officers and men, following the example of their captain, could not well be otherwise than they were."

The next year, keeping him still in the Adriatic, he placed under his command two more frigates : the *Active*, 38, Captain J. A. Gordon,\* and the *Cerberus*, 32, Captain Whitby; and Hoste had hardly received this addition to his force, when he signalised it by a fresh achievement on a larger scale. Murat's government was at this time making great exertions to fit out a fleet at Venice, and in June, 1810, Hoste received intelligence that a convoy of vessels laden with naval stores, from Trieste, had put into the small harbour of Grao, on their way to the island city. He at once resolved to destroy them. The shoals in front of Grao prevented the frigates from approaching, but he had no doubt that the boats of the squadron would prove sufficient : his confidence being increased by very incorrect reports which he had received of the strength of the defences of Grao itself, and of the garrison which manned them. His first-lieutenant was absent, so the honour of leading the enterprise devolved upon the second-

\* Now Governor of Greenwich Hospital.

lieutenant, Mr. Slaughter, and it could not have been entrusted to better hands. The Active was at such a distance in the offing that her boats did not reach the shore till the struggle was over ; but those belonging to the other frigates, after a three-hours' pull, reached the shore a little before daybreak, and at once landed and attacked the town, while the Amphion's third-lieutenant, Mr. O'Brien, supported them by moving along the shore with the two launches, each armed with a carronade. The garrison proved to be far more numerous than had been expected, and was drawn from two of the most distinguished regiments in the French army. It was also supported by a numerous body of peasantry in the rear, acting as sharpshooters ; and their fire was so true and damaging to our men that they turned a little to the left to protect their advance by the cover afforded by some rising ground in that direction. Mistaking this movement for a retreat, the French advanced from their position and charged with the bayonet, and in a moment the face of affairs was altered. Our men met their onset with national firmness, drove them back, and charged them in their turn ; and, after killing eight, and wounding several more, compelled the whole body, amounting to forty men, including officers, to surrender. The town and the thirty vessels, the original object and prize of the conflict, surrendered too. Mr. Slaughter's labours were not yet over. While he was busy destroying those vessels which it was impossible to remove, and getting the others over the shoals, a fresh detachment of French infantry came down upon him from one of the more inland villages ; and again he and his men had to fight for their lives. However, they repulsed their new assailants likewise, taking twenty-three more prisoners ; and, after toiling all day at the removal or destruction of their prizes, in the evening they rejoined their ships in triumph, with a loss of only four men killed and eight wounded.

The next year Hoste crowned these exploits with one

of a more strictly naval character. In the autumn of the same year he had been disappointed in his endeavours to fall in with a French squadron, which under Commodore Dubourdieu, dodged him about in the Adriatic; and entering the harbour of St. George in the Island of Lissa, destroyed some British privateers and small trading-vessels, and escaped to Ancona before Hoste, who, after having been misled by false information, had at last obtained accurate intelligence of his movements, could overtake him. In the port of Ancona the Frenchman was safe from his attack, and there he lay till March of the next year, 1811; when, having taken on board a body of troops sufficient in his judgment to reduce and garrison Lissa, he weighed anchor and sailed across the Gulf to that island. By great good fortune Hoste was at that moment off Lissa with his squadron, which had lately been reinforced by Captain Phipps Hornby in the *Volage*, 22; and, as M. Dubourdieu approached, he at once formed his line of battle in close order, under easy sail, to receive the attack. In reporting his exploit of the preceding autumn to his superiors at Paris, the Frenchman had represented the British squadron as having shunned an encounter with him, and himself and his crew as eagerly desirous to bring their enemies to action. And he had greater reason than ever to wish to do so now; since, while our force consisted of one frigate of 38 guns, two of 32, and one 22-gun corvette, he reckoned under his command four 44-gun French and Venetian frigates, two of 32 guns, a 16-gun corvette and four smaller vessels: so that his strength more than doubled that of the British Captain. He bore down upon his enemy in two divisions, meaning, apparently, to break our line in two places, in imitation of Nelson's attack at Trafalgar. Hoste too recollected Trafalgar, though to his deep regret he had been detached from the fleet before the battle; and now, as his men were standing by their guns waiting

for the arrival of the French within range, he too encouraged his little squadron with a signal, and ran up "Remember Nelson!" to the masthead. The cheers of his four crews showed that they had not forgotten him; and, as the battle proceeded, their conduct showed it even more undeniably than their voices. As soon as M. Dubourdieu, who came on leading his division in *La Favorite*, 44, got within gunshot, our whole line opened upon him and his followers a fire so well directed and incessant as wholly to confuse their movements. Abandoning his attempt to break our line, the French commander now tried to pass round the *Amphion*, the van-ship of our squadron, so as to place her between two fires; but he was so warmly assailed as he came up that his ship was rendered totally unmanageable, and, while attempting to wear, ran on the rocks of Lissa. Hoste himself had got so near the rocks that he was forced to signal to the whole squadron to wear, to avoid a similar misfortune, and, while executing this manœuvre, he was unable to prevent the remainder of the French division from passing under his stern and engaging our ships to leeward, while the other division continued the action to windward. The British squadron was thus placed between two fires, and most of our ships were at times in positions which exposed them to being severely raked; but these discouraging circumstances did not daunt the men, who, on the contrary, seemed to redouble their efforts. The French *Flore*, 40, took her station on the lee-quarter of the *Amphion*, the Venetian *Bellona*, 32, took hers on the weather-quarter; but, after a protracted and severe contest, they both struck to their intended victim. Dismayed by their fate, their comrades sought refuge in flight. The *Amphion* was too much crippled by her double combat to pursue; but the *Active* and *Cerberus* gave chase, overtook the Venetian *Corona*, 44, and compelled her also to surrender. The others escaped.

Hoste had gained a very brilliant victory, but he was not rewarded with the safe possession of all his prizes, for, taking advantage of the crippled state of part of our squadron, and of the absence of the others in chase, *La Flore* stole off after she had surrendered. Hoste was most indignant at such a breach of the laws of honourable warfare. When she hauled down her colours he was so fully occupied with the *Bellona* that he forbore to take possession of her, and, after that frigate too had yielded, he had no longer a boat to go to her; but for a long time she had lain so entirely at his mercy that he or Captain Gordon could have sunk her, and the prisoners from the other ships admitted that she had surrendered and of right belonged to him. He followed her to *Lessina* where she had taken refuge and claimed her in a formal note. But throughout the whole war French officers continually violated the usual international rules of combat, knowing that such conduct would receive the support and approval of the Government. The *Flore*, with the rest of the ships that had escaped, was safe in *Lessina*, and there she was resolved to stay. The *Favorite*, too, was lost to him as a trophy; her commodore had been slain, and the rest of the crew, when they found all their attempts to get her afloat unavailing, set her on fire, and shortly after the close of the action she blew up. But this diminution of the number of his legitimate trophies could not deprive Captain Hoste of the credit he deservedly received for so decisive a defeat of a force so greatly superior to his own. And the authorities at the Admiralty showed their sense of their merits in the manner most pleasing to him, by giving medals to all the captains concerned, and promoting all the first-lieutenants.

The *Amphion* was so nearly worn out, having been in commission ever since the renewal of the war, and had been so terribly shattered in this action, that Sir Charles Cotton sent her home with the prizes. Hoste himself immediately returned to the station in a larger frigate, the

Bacchante, 38, in which he continued distressing the enemy, and making more than one successful attack on the enemy's coasting vessels with his boats, but meeting with no opportunity of repeating his achievement off Lissa. Before the end of the year, however, one of the frigates which had shared with him the glories of that day, had the good fortune to bear part in the discomfiture of another French squadron at as nearly as possible the very same place that had witnessed our former success. Captain Gordon, in his old ship, the *Active*, was now under the command of Captain Murray Maxwell in the *Alceste* of the same force, who with these two ships, the *Unité*, 36, Captain Chamberlayne, and the 20-gun ship *Acorn*, Captain Bligh, was at the end of November lying in Port St. George, when the sentinels on the high land above descried a French squadron sailing down the Gulf. Captain Maxwell, like Hoste, had been very active with his boats, when enterprises offered which the *Alceste* drew too much water to perform herself. The year before, he had in this way destroyed a powerful battery in the Gulf of Fréjus; and though the barge and yawl, which were all that he could spare for the service, had but one gun apiece, they also captured five vessels, of which only two were unarmed, the other three having no fewer than fourteen guns between them. He now left the *Acorn*, reinforced with a draft of seamen and marines from the other ships, to protect Lissa; and with the frigates weighed anchor, and set sail in pursuit of the enemy, whom, as they were reported to consist of three ships, he suspected to be the same that had escaped from Hoste in the spring. They were not, however, the remainder of M. Dubourdieu's squadron, but another of nearly the same force: the 40-gun frigates *Pomone* and *Pauline*, and the *Persanne*, a 26-gun ship, laden with military stores, and bound to Trieste. The French Commodore in the *Pauline*, as soon as Maxwell came in sight fled under every sail that he could carry.



The *Persanne*, unable to keep up with her consorts, bore away to the N.E.; and Captain Maxwell, sending the *Unité* in chase of her, with his own ship and the *Active* pressed on after the heavier frigates. He had heard of Hoste's signal, and now he telegraphed to Captain Gordon to "Remember Lissa." And the *Active's* men, proud of their former achievement and of the well-earned compliment, cheered loudly as the signal was made out and repeated. After a chase of four hours the *Alceste*, which was rather the fastest of our frigates, got near enough to the *Pomone* to exchange a few shots with her; but, desiring to attack the *Commodore*, she was pressing on, intending to leave the *Pomone* to the *Active*, when a chance shot carried away her maintopmast, and as she was visibly hampered by the wreck, the crews of both the French frigates set up a cheer as she fell back, and the *Pauline* hastened to bear down upon her in her crippled state. The *Pomone* would willingly have continued her attack on her also; but by this time the *Active* had come up and engaged that vessel so vigorously that she soon found she had enough to do without interfering in the action between the two *commodores*. The *Active* had been hotly engaged for nearly an hour when a round-shot struck the brave Captain Gordon on the knee, carrying his leg completely away: unmoved by the agony of his wound, he calmly ordered his first-lieutenant to fight the ship as well as he could; and, as he was borne down to the cockpit, seeing the second-lieutenant on the maindeck, he gave him the same order, in the event of anything happening to the other. They acted so fully up to his instructions, that in three-quarters of an hour afterwards they had shot away their antagonist's main and mizen masts, and had compelled her to haul down her colours. The *Alceste* was less fortunate: she, as has been mentioned, had the *Pauline* for her antagonist, and for some time kept up the engagement with great vigour; but unfortunately the loss of her topmast placed the power of fighting or retreating in

the hands of the Frenchman, and he found himself, in spite of his apparent superiority of strength, so decidedly overmatched, that at the end of little more than half an hour he bore off, while the *Alceste* was unable to pursue him. The *Persanne* was not overtaken by the *Unité* till the action between the rest of the squadrons had terminated, but she was too lightly armed (her guns being only 8-pounders) to resist for a moment, and after receiving a single broadside she struck her colours. Even if she was inferior to her antagonist, the *Pomona* and *Pauline* were so decidedly superior to theirs, that the two squadrons may fairly be taken as of equal force: and the capture of two ships out of three was an achievement most creditable to the victors, and fully showed the prudence of the French in avoiding actions on equal terms whenever it was in their power.

On the southern side of Italy our ships were not less active, though they were not quite so fortunate in the opportunities afforded them of performing conspicuous exploits. In the preceding year, indeed, one very brilliant and successful action had been fought by Captain Jahleel Brenton, who had continued to exhibit in larger ships the same combination of daring and prudence that first obtained him notice in the *Speedy*. In the spring of 1810 he was cruising in the Bay of Naples as captain of the *Spartan*, a fine 38-gun frigate, with the *Success*, 32, and the 18-gun brig *Espoir*, under his orders. In working down the coast, the boats of his squadron had disarmed some heavy batteries and had made some valuable prizes; and on the 1st of May the two frigates (the *Espoir* having parted company) chased a French squadron of four vessels, one of which was a frigate larger than either of them, another, a corvette, very little smaller than the *Success*, and the other two gunbrigs of ten and eight guns, into the Mole of Naples. Unable to attack them there, and certain that they would never come out to fight him and his

consort, he dismissed the *Success*, and lay by himself in front of the Bay to invite an attack. The next day but one, having procured a reinforcement of eight gunboats, the French Commodore and his squadron stood towards him. The Spartan gladly advanced to meet them, and a little before eight, having so manœuvred as she bore down as to cut off one of the brigs and the gunboats from the main body, engaged the large frigate, *La Ceres*, 44, within pistolshot. Both ships fought vigorously, each inflicting great damage on her opponent; but the Frenchman suffered so far the more severely that he was presently glad to take refuge under the batteries of Baia, while the British ship, though too much crippled to follow her, was still able to pour a raking fire into the corvette, and to cut off the 8-gun brig, *La Sparvière*. The corvette, after losing her foretopmast, was rescued by the gunboats, which towed her also into Baia, whither the other brig also escaped, but the *Sparvière* remained in Captain Brenton's hands. He had not achieved this brilliant success against so apparently overpowering a force without a heavy loss. His killed and wounded amounted to upwards of forty men; scarcely one of the wounded men having been more severely injured than himself, who about the middle of the action was struck down by a grape-shot. The loss of the French could not, of course, be correctly ascertained: their own accounts did not represent it as less than that of 130 killed and wounded; and, as they could not deny their force to have amounted to ninety-six guns and above 1100 men, they tried to console themselves a little for a defeat which had been witnessed by King Joachim himself, by representing the Spartan as a cut-down 74, with fifty guns of heavy calibre, though even that description failed to make her much above half as strong as the squadron she had discomfited.

The *Impérieuse* was now commanded by Captain H. Duncan, the second son of the hero of Camperdown, and

he was so much beloved by his men that when Sir Edward Pellew, now Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, offered him a line-of-battle ship, they entreated him to stay with them, promising as a bribe, that, if he would consent, they would take any two French frigates they could meet. He did stay; and, though his crew did not succeed in finding any prizes exactly answering to that description, they proved themselves as irresistible in their boats as they had been under Lord Cochrane. The anniversary of Camperdown in 1811 they signalised by standing in to the Gulf of Salerno, where a battery of unusual strength, and admirably placed on a commanding rock, protected three well-manned gunboats. The frigate sank one of the gunboats and disabled the heavy guns of the fort, and then the boats went in to complete the work. The garrison of the fort, far exceeding them in numbers, had still their muskets, and received them with a heavy fire; but the seamen and marines, led by the First-lieutenant, Mr. Travers, forced their way in at the point of the bayonet, took thirty prisoners, put the rest of the garrison to flight, threw the cannon down the cliff into the sea, and then descending brought off the other gunboats.

A day or two afterwards, Captain Duncan was joined by Captain Napier in the *Thames*, who had just before captured a numerous strongly-armed and richly-freighted flotilla of gunboats and merchantmen at Porto dell' In-freschi; and this addition to his force enabled him to venture on more extended enterprises. The two frigates coasting along seeking for a foe, till they came to Palinuro, named after the pilot of *Æneas*,\* and still preserving the recollection of the Sibyl's prophecy. In that harbour they discovered a flotilla of gunboats, with a number of merchant-vessels, and a large quantity of timber for the use of the Neapolitan navy, so strongly protected by fortifications on shore, as well as by a body of troops posted on

\* *Æternumque locus Palinuri nomen habebit.*—*Æn.* VI. 381.

some commanding ground, that, though they determined to destroy them, they thought they required assistance to secure success. Duncan therefore sent Napier to Sicily to borrow a detachment of soldiers from General Maitland, our commander in that island. They were willingly lent; and on the 1st of November Captain Duncan made the attack. While the *Impérieuse* stood in in front of the harbour to attract the attention of the gunboats and principal battery, Napier landed from the Thames at the back of the harbour with the soldiers and the detachments of seamen and marines which had been selected to co-operate with them. He soon drove the enemy's troops from the heights; but, since light and baffling winds prevented the *Impérieuse* from approaching as near the shore as she had intended, and, since without the co-operation of her heavy guns no impression could be made on the land-batteries, he was forced to postpone his operations against them till the following morning. For that night our men bivouacked on the ground they had won. At midnight the enemy made a vigorous attack on them in the hope of recovering it, but were gallantly repulsed. At daybreak the wind became more favourable, and Duncan, bringing his own frigate and the Thames closer in, desired Napier to return on board to command her in the attack of the batteries. It was not very easy for him to regain his ship. The gunboats so completely commanded the spot where he had landed the night before that to carry a boat thither was manifestly impossible, and he was forced to risk being lowered down over the cliff by means of ropes. At last he reached the Thames in safety, and the sea-breeze now bore both frigates so close to the shore that they were able to direct their fire with irresistible weight on both batteries and gunboats. Half an hour silenced the batteries, which were instantly taken possession of and dismantled by the seamen and troops who still remained on shore. Some of the gunboats were sunk, the rest

captured, and with them the whole squadron of merchantmen and storeships. And though, before all this was accomplished, the enemy's troops had been reinforced till they amounted to 700 men, at least double the number of our soldiers and seamen who had been employed on shore, the whole of our men were safely re-embarked, and Duncan put to sea again in triumph with nearly fifty prizes.

In the waters outside the Mediterranean the enemy fared no better, and a defeat which, in the autumn of 1811, was suffered by one of their squadrons, was the more remarkable from having taken place under the eyes of the French Emperor, who this year repeated his visit to Boulogne, which he had made with so little profit or credit seven or eight years before. It is hardly probable that he had seriously readmitted into his mind the project of invading our shores, at a time when he was utterly unable to drive one small British army from the continent, where it was already visibly endangering his brother's tenure of his usurped dominions; but, either out of obstinacy or bravado, or perhaps with some idea which he had not very clearly defined even to himself, he had recently strengthened the flotilla of prames, gunbrigs, and other small vessels, which he kept fit for service at Boulogne; and on the 20th of September he arrived from Paris to honour them with a formal review. They wanted some encouragement; for, at the beginning of the month, fifteen of them had been beaten off by two British 10-gun brigs, the *Rinaldo*, Captain Anderson, and the *Redpole*, Captain Macdonald. The enemy had been especially anxious to capture the *Rinaldo*, because her gallant commander had been for months the terror of all the privateers in the Channel. He had captured one of eighteen guns, and he had beaten off an entire squadron of four, all larger than his own vessel; sinking one lugger of sixteen guns, and driving her three consorts, each carrying fourteen guns, to seek shelter in Dieppe.

The *Rinaldo* and *Redpole* now, with the *Viper*, 8, Lieutenant D'Arcy, formed part of a squadron, of which Captain Carteret, in the *Naiad*, 38, had the command ; but on the day on which Napoleon reached Boulogne, they were absent at different parts of the coast, and the *Naiad* was lying by herself at anchor in front of the harbour. She seemed so tempting and certain a prize, that, soon after midday, in obedience to Napoleon's express order, the French Rear-Admiral Baste, who at that time had the chief command there, put to sea himself to attack her ; he took with him seven prames, each armed with twelve 24-pounders, and manned with a hundred and twelve men, ten 4-gun brigs, and one sloop ; and with this force he made no doubt of being able to surround the *Naiad* and carry her into Boulogne. Captain Carteret had seen the Imperial flag for some time in the central ship of the flotilla ; and, after it was struck there, he was aware that the Emperor was still on board a boat in the harbour, so that he expected the French seamen to do honour to the Emperor's presence by an attack on the frigate. Both wind and tide were such that he could easily have withdrawn out of their reach ; but, though the approaching enemy had a force exceeding his in the proportion of at least four to one, he thought the honour of his country concerned in the maintenance of his position, and, with springs on his cable, quietly awaited their attack as he remained at anchor. They had the great advantage of being able to choose their own distance. The prames commenced the warfare ; standing on till they came within gunshot, firing their broadsides, then tacking from the *Naiad*, and presently returning and repeating their cannonade. After about three-quarters of an hour, the brigs and the sloop, armed with two of the same heavy guns, followed their example, and the *Naiad* returned their fire. She could not ascertain what damage she inflicted, but what she received was limited to some trifling injury to her spars, as she had not a man hurt. At slack-water

she weighed anchor, with the view, by getting to windward, of bringing the flotilla to closer action; but, when she made sail towards them, they retreated under the protection of their batteries. The next morning the prames came forth again with a reinforcement of five additional brigs; but by this time the Rinaldo, Redpole, Viper, and another brig, the Castilian, 18, Captain Braimer, had joined the Naiad, so that the contest was somewhat more equal than it had been on the 20th, though still the odds were greatly in favour of the French.\* As they advanced, our squadron weighed and actually drew off from the shore, in the hope of thus alluring them to follow us beyond the protection of their formidable batteries; and Captain Carteret signalled to the other captains "to prepare to attack the enemy's van," and to reserve their fire till they were "quite close" to them.

M. Baste, however, was too wary to be tempted out of the reach of the assistance of the guns on shore: so, when Captain Carteret perceived that, after standing out for a short distance, he was tacking to return, he himself, followed by the Rinaldo and the rest of the squadron, bore down under a press of sail, receiving a heavy fire of shot and shell from both the flotilla and the land-batteries, but not returning it from a single gun till he got within pistol-shot of the prames. He desired, above all things, to overtake that which bore the French Admiral's flag; but, as M. Baste had been last in the advance, he was

\* The British squadron now consisted of—

Naiad .. .. .	38
Castilian .. .. .	18
Rinaldo .. .. .	10
Redpole .. .. .	10
Viper .. .. .	8
	<hr/>
	84

The French consisted of—

Seven 12-gun prames ..	84 guns,
Fifteen 4-gun brigs ..	60
	<hr/>
	144

Moreover, the French guns were throughout far heavier than the English. The entire number of the English crews scarcely exceeded 600 men: the French crews were nearly 1400.



now naturally foremost in the retreat, and he was pushing on for the land with such speed, that our captains were forced to content themselves with a less distinguished prize, and with cutting off the second in command, *La Ville de Lyons*, under the command of *Commodore Coupé*. Of her crew of a hundred and twelve men, sixty were soldiers of the 72nd, one of Napoleon's choicest regiments, and, when our men boarded her, they made a heroic resistance, not surrendering till they were wholly overpowered. While the *Naiad* was engaged with her, the brigs utterly defeated her comrades, but were unable to pursue them without exposing themselves to destruction from the forts on shore. Our whole loss amounted to no more than three killed and sixteen wounded, scarcely more than half of that which was sustained by the *Ville de Lyons* alone. And thus, on this, the last occasion on which the French Emperor visited his ships, the result of the conflict was by no means such as to encourage him to change the opinion that he had confessed six years before, that it was an idle dream to suppose that his subjects could ever successfully contend with British sailors.

So far our fleets pursued their career of triumph, unchequered by a single reverse or failure; but in the Baltic they met with one sad disaster, to which indeed no mortal enemy contributed, but which is, nevertheless, worth recording as a proof of the dangers of the navigation of that inhospitable sea, which often embarrass a commander more than any terrors of hostile ships or fortresses. Indeed, as far as the enemy were concerned, our operations against them in the northern waters were as successful as any that we attempted elsewhere. One very dashing assault, in which Lieutenant Blythe, with the boats of the *Quebec* and *Raven*, cut out four gunboats, each armed with three heavy guns, which were lying between the Isle of Norderney and the coast of East Friesland, has hardly been surpassed by any exploit of the kind; and the pre-

servation of the Island of Anholt was a still greater achievement. The governor was Captain Maurice of the navy, the same officer who, in 1805, had so gallantly defended the Diamond Rock against Villeneuve. The garrison under his orders amounted to three hundred and eighty marines and artillery, and he was further supported by the Tartar, 32, and the Sheldrake, 16, which, very fortunately, had arrived from England the day before. With this inadequate force he beat off an attack, which at the end of March, the Danes made upon him with three battalions of infantry and a squadron of eighteen heavy gunboats. The ships, though greatly hampered by the shoals and reefs, scattered the gunboats and took or sank five of the largest of them; and he, with his troops on shore, utterly defeated the army, which the retreat of the gunboats had completely isolated, and took more than five hundred prisoners.

No Danish or Russian fleet of large ships would put to sea to encounter Sir James Saumarez, who lay all the summer, not, indeed, wholly inactive or useless (as his presence with a fleet, and the resolute language which he held, had certainly some share in strengthening the determination to which Russia and Sweden came before the end of the year to break with France), but still without finding any opportunity for striking a blow worthy of the force under his orders, and at the return of winter the ships began to return to England. Rear-Admiral Reynolds, the second in command, whose flag was flying in the *St. George*, 98, was the first to sail, having a homeward-bound convoy under his escort. He conducted them in safety through the Great Belt, but soon afterwards encountered a heavy gale, in which fourteen or fifteen of the convoy were lost; and the flagship herself was driven ashore, and was reduced to save herself by the sacrifice of her masts. When the storm had ceased, she rigged jurmasts, and, as the rest of the fleet overtook her

before she repaired her damages, appeared to all quite fit to proceed on her voyage; though, as a matter of precaution, Saumarez appointed the two seventy-fours, Defence and Cressy, to attend upon her to aid her in case of necessity. On the 18th of December the whole fleet quitted Wingo Sound in company, but the next day the wind was found to be so unfavorable that the Admiral signalled to return, and the greater portion of the fleet regained the harbour in safety. Unhappily the St. George, her escort the Cressy, which had her in tow, and the Defence parted company. On the next day the weather became very stormy, and the currents were found to be as hard to contend with as the wind. When the wind lulled, as it did once or twice, it actually increased the danger of the ships, by depriving them of the most effectual means of stemming the currents, which were driving them on rocks that were visible at no great distance on the lee-beam. For three days the crippled three-decker and her companions struggled manfully with the gale, and, though the St. George's rudder received some injury, no one apprehended any disaster. On the evening of the 22nd the storm abated; but the next morning it returned with redoubled violence, splitting the sails, and the St. George, under her insufficient rigging, was seen to labour and roll violently, while a heavy sea was driving her on the iron-bound shore of Jutland. Her consorts inferred that she was even more crippled than her appearance seemed to indicate, from the circumstance of her never attempting to wear, the only manœuvre which could possibly save her from going on shore. The Cressy, though she had cast off the tow, stayed with her till her commander, Captain Pater, found that he was only endangering his own ship, without the possibility of assisting the Admiral, so rapidly were the three vessels drifting towards the rocky land under their lee. He wore his ship, and beat off the shore, thus saving the Cressy: but Captain Atkins, who

commanded the Defence, conceived that his duty required him to remain with the St. George till she herself should make the signal to part company, and he persevered in his heroic self-devotion, though so tremendous was the sea, that one wave which struck his ship lifted the spare anchor out of its berth with such violence that in its fall it killed nearly thirty men. Soon after midnight both ships struck ; the anchors were let go, and for a moment seemed to take hold, but the waves were irresistible, and in less than three hours beat both ships to pieces. Of the entire crews only eighteen were saved ; some of those who were not drowned being found afterwards frozen to death in the rigging. This was the fate of the Admiral himself and his captain. His secretary, Mr. Royston, and Captain Atkins were washed ashore before they were absolutely dead, and the Danes, always generous foes, treated them with the most energetic humanity ; but they were so exhausted that, though life was not wholly extinct, it could not be long preserved, and Captain Atkins perished, the victim of a faithful discharge of his duty to his commander.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

1812—1814.

Captain Harvey destroys a flotilla in the Channel—Captain Talbot takes the Rivoli—Captain Hotham destroys two large frigates—Captain Hayes in Basque Roads—Destruction of a French flotilla at the mouth of the Rhone—Destruction of two French flotillas at Alasseio and Languillia—Captain Napier takes Ponza—Destroys a squadron at Cavalaciè—Captain Coghlan captures a flotilla—Gallantry of Lieutenant Cannon—Exploits of Captain Hoste in the Adriatic—Admiral Durham takes French frigates—Captains Everleigh and Mackenzie take two French frigates—Captain Phillimore in the Eurotas takes the Clorinde—Co-operation of our squadrons with the armies in Spain—Admiral Berkeley in the Tagus—Sir R. Williams at Valada—Captain Codrington at Tarragona—Captain Usher off Malaga—Sir G. Collier and Sir Home Popham on the northern coast of Spain—Sir G. Collier at St. Sebastian—Rear-Admiral Penrose in the Adour and Garonne—Rear-Admiral Martin at Riga—Captain Farquahar at Gluckstadt—End of the war.

THE exploit of Captain Carteret stimulated other captains on the Channel station to emulate his skilful gallantry. Captain Harvey was cruising a little to the eastward of Dieppe, in the 10-gun brig Rosario, when, in March, 1812, he discovered a flotilla of twelve 4-gun brigs and one lugger of somewhat larger size, on its way from Boulogne to Cherbourg. Each brig carried fifty men, a crew numerically but little inferior to that of the Rosario, and they were resolute men under a skilful commander, who, when the Rosario endeavoured to cut off the rearmost vessel from her comrades, formed his whole squadron into a close line, and, boldly assuming the offensive, bore down towards the Rosario. Fortunately at this moment another British vessel, of rather larger size, the 16-gun brig, Griffin, appeared in sight, and, on Captain Harvey making signal that he had an enemy before him, her commander, Captain Trollope, eagerly pressed forward to assist

his brother officer. Still, as she was as yet at a distance, for some time the Rosario bore the whole brunt of the combat, continually receiving the fire of the whole French line, and very often that of some heavy batteries on shore; and in spite of the great odds against which she was contending, she had thrown the whole flotilla into confusion, had captured one vessel, and had disabled and driven another on shore before the Griffin could join her. She, too, as soon as she came near enough, began to play her part vigorously; she captured one of the enemy's brigs, which had anchored under the land-batteries, cut her cable, carried her off, and drove another on shore, venturing so close under the batteries to effect her object, that she ran no slight risk of being disabled herself, and in fact did suffer so much in her rigging that she was incapacitated from continuing the chase of the enemy. The Rosario still kept up her fire, and made another prize, but by this time the evening was closing in, and, as the course of the action had by this time carried the combatants down to Dieppe, the rest of the flotilla took advantage of the darkness to enter the harbour, whither of course the British brig could not pursue them. Captain Harvey deservedly received the highest praises from Admiral Foley, the Commander-in-chief in the Downs, the same officer who had been Nelson's captain at Copenhagen, and was promoted by the Admiralty. His achievement could hardly be surpassed considering the size of his vessel; and a most convincing and gratifying proof of the skill as well as gallantry with which it was performed is to be found in the fact that it did not cost us a single life, and only four men wounded.

Our large fleets still lay in forced inaction, through the timid caution of the French Government, which forbade their own fleets to put to sea, though Toulon, and perhaps one or two other ports, now contained a force to which, in numbers at least, the British Admiral, who was blockading

them, was visibly unequal. One or two, however, of our line-of-battle ships, in the year 1812, found opportunities of distinguishing themselves. At the beginning of the year Sir Edward Pellew, who still commanded our Mediterranean fleet, hearing that the French 74, *Livoli*, was on the point of setting sail from Venice, despatched Captain John Talbot, in the *Victorious*, of the same force, to watch for her; and he, having Captain Andrew, with the 18-gun brig *Weazel*, in company, on the afternoon of the 21st of March, discovered the foe, of which he was in search, steering across the gulf towards Rota, with a squadron of three or four smaller vessels like the *Weazel*. Our ships at once chased, and before daybreak, the next morning, the *Weazel* came up with the French brigs, and engaged two of them. After a brisk but short action, one of them, *Le Mercure*, of eighteen guns, which, though in number only equal to those of the British brig, were far superior in calibre and weight of metal, blew up, and her comrades fled. The *Weazel* made sail in chase, but, as the objects of her pursuit were manifestly faster than herself, Captain Talbot presently recalled her, thinking that in the shallow water, in which he and the *Rivoli* were engaged, it might very probably come to pass that he might be in need of her assistance. The *Weazel* obeyed the signal, and skilfully taking up her position on the bows of the French line-of-battle ship, gave her three raking broadsides : but the *Victorious* had already crippled her; her mizenmast had fallen, and her fire was almost silenced. It had been a conflict within half-pistolshot, with very little manœuvring, which the almost entire absence of wind had rendered impracticable. The ships had been most equally matched in everything but the number of the crews; and, though in this respect the French ship had an immense preponderance, it only served to make her loss heavier. After an action of four hours and a half, she struck; when it was found that she had sustained a loss

surpassed probably by that of no ship of her size during the war. Upwards of four hundred of her crew were killed or wounded, and in one list or other her captain, Commodore Barré, and nearly every officer on board was included. Nor had we gained our triumph cheaply; the Weazel, indeed, had not a man hurt, but the Victorious had not fewer than forty-two men killed and ninety-nine wounded; her captain too being among the latter.

Another 74, the Northumberland, commanded by Captain H. Hotham, had what was perhaps a more arduous task, and accomplished it with equal success and credit. At the beginning of the year, two of the largest class of French frigates, the *Arianne* and *Andromaque*, each carrying forty-four guns, and four hundred and fifty men, with the 18-gun brig, *Mamélouck*, were cruising in the Bay of Biscay, when they fell in with the British 50-gun ship *Leopard* and the *Endymion* frigate, the latter of which was commanded by a nephew of Nelson's, Sir W. Bolton; and, though the *Endymion* was one of the fastest vessels in our service, they outsailed her, and, making good use of their extraordinary speed, in the course of the next four or five weeks captured upwards of thirty-six merchantmen belonging to us or to our allies. They had even added to their prizes some vessels belonging to the Americans, knowing certainly that the United States were neither friendly to us nor hostile to France, but feeling sure that their own Government was reduced to such distress by the ceaseless wars of their Emperor, that the value of the booty would blind it to the illegality of its acquisition. If, however, their cruise was profitable in the beginning, it was destined to come to an early end. Roused by the complaints of our traders, the Admiralty took measures to stop the depredations of this squadron; and, on the 19th of May, Captain Hotham was sent to cruise in search of it off L'Orient, the port from which it had issued, and to which, laden as it was with booty, it might be expected soon to return. Hotham



had only been three days on the ground marked out for him, when, at ten in the morning of the 22nd, he fell in with the French ships, a few miles to the northward of Isle Groix, making all sail for L'Orient. The 12-gun brig, Growler, Captain Weeks, was within reach of his signals when he first discovered them; and, ordering her to join in the chase, he at once made sail to cut them off from the harbour. By holding a course round the south-eastern end of Groix he succeeded in this object; and, though both on the isle and on the mainland were heavy batteries, to which any attempt to pass between them must necessarily expose his ship, he pressed gallantly through the passage. The chase had lasted upwards of four hours before he cleared the island, and to the northward of Groix the land-batteries were so formidable, that, as the wind was fair for such a manœuvre, and very fresh, the frigates ventured on an attempt to run by the Northumberland, so as to place themselves under their protection. Being ignorant of the depth of water close in shore, Captain Hotham was unable to intercept them, but he turned their very success to their more complete destruction. He began the action at less than a quarter of a mile from them, by opening on them a heavy cannonade, which they and three batteries on shore returned with great spirit for about twenty minutes, doing scarcely any injury to the Northumberland's crew, but seriously damaging her sails and rigging. Captain Hotham's object now was to prevent them from passing outside a dangerous rock, which was seen ahead of the ship, to do which, it was necessary for the line-of-battle ships to keep as close to it as she could without running aground; and with such skilful care did the master of the Northumberland, Mr. Hugh Stuart, now steer her, that he conducted her in safety within her own length of the rock, while the frigates, thus driven to pass inside it, all grounded, in full sail, on the reef that ran from it to the shore.

As they were now secured, Captain Hotham, before renewing his attack on them, for a while turned his attention to repairing his own damages; and, before he had completed this work, the Growler had reached the scene of action, and had opened her fire on the enemy's stranded squadron. The tide, which was on the ebb, had caused them to fall over towards the shore, exposing their copper to our shot, and at half-past five the Northumberland stood in and cannonaded them with deliberate aim, till their bottoms were completely riddled. One of the frigates was presently seen to be in flames, and an ominous smoke began to proceed from the other. Their crews had already deserted them, and, leaving the Growler to prevent their return, the Northumberland hauled off to repair some very serious damage which she had received in her hull from a fort on the shore. Two other batteries had been equally unremitting in their cannonade, but Captain Hotham had chosen his position with such judgment that their shot had failed to reach him. It was hardly dark when the frigate first seen to be on fire blew up; the other, after burning all night, came to a similar end before daybreak the next morning; later in the day the brig also blew up: and Captain Hotham, having thus destroyed the whole squadron, returned to join the fleet with which Sir H. Neale was blockading Brest.

The year 1811, as has been mentioned in the preceding chapter, witnessed the destruction of some of our finest ships by the fury of the elements. The year 1812, though made memorable by no such calamity as the loss of the *St. George* and the *Defence*, did not wholly spare us similar sorrows: nor, indeed, is it possible that a navy, whose duties call it to search every quarter of the globe, and to brave every season alike, should ever be able to boast that its numbers had suffered no diminution from shipwreck; that none of its brave and loyal seamen have been buried in the deep; some, like those of the *St. George*,

under the eyes of their comrades unable to help them ; some like those of the *Blenheim*, unheard in their cries for aid, unseen in their final catastrophe ; but all, as perishing in their country's service, entitled to the same honour with those whose blood has been poured out in battle to secure her victory. But though vessels were wrecked in this as in other years, this year also supplied one remarkable instance in which the skill and presence of mind of her captain, and the high discipline and zealous obedience of her crew, preserved their ship from such a fate ; and the extreme rarity of the occasions on which it is desirable or possible to practise so hazardous a manœuvre, may well entitle it to mention.\* The *Magnificent*, 74, commanded by Captain John Hayes, was, on the evening of the 16th December, at anchor amid the reefs at the entrance of the Basque Roads, when a heavy gale came on, which warned the captain to strike his topgallantmasts. After an hour of fierce squalls, the ship was found to be driving, but the small bower-anchor being let go brought her up ; and advantage was taken of the momentary respite thus procured to strike her lower yards and topmasts also. Presently the best bower again held. But it was plain that the ship was in a most dangerous position ; she was only in ten fathoms water ; around her the sea was breaking on reefs, not a quarter of a mile distant ; and, before midnight, the man who was heaving the lead gave notice that a rock, rising three fathoms above the ground, was right under the ship's bottom. In this position of imminent peril, the *Magnificent* remained till daylight, when again she was announced to be driving ; but all her anchors were let go, and again she brought up and rode with the best bower and small bower ahead and the spare anchor

\* The incident here recorded furnished Captain Marryatt with one of the most striking scenes in his admirable tale of 'Peter Simple ;' though in the novel the *Diomedé* is represented as already under sail, which diminishes the difficulty of the manœuvre.

on the starboard bow. Still, though these held, there was but little hope that they would continue long to do so; so manifest did the breakers on all sides and close under the ship make it that she was surrounded with rocks, which must soon cut the cables. In fact a reef, on which, if she should strike it, she must inevitably go to pieces, was hardly distant a cable's length; and, though the wind had shifted a little, and, having veered from the W.S.W. to W. by N., now blew from a quarter hardly so unfavourable as at the commencement of the gale, the change of the tide to flood more than counteracted this advantage; a heavy sea was setting towards the reef, and neither officers nor men thought it possible to get the ship clear of it, especially as, in consequence of the yards and topmasts having been struck, no sail could be made on her. The Captain alone still disdained to despair; slight as the change in the wind was, he saw in it a possible means of saving the ship, and, having matured his plan, he gave his orders with as much coolness as if he had been working from Spithead to Portsmouth Harbour. He ordered the lower yards to be swayed two-thirds up the masts, and a hawser to be got out from the starboard quarter to the spare cable as a spring to cast the ship by. The hope founded on this last operation vanished before it was completed: the spare cable parted with a sudden jerk, and the bowers were alone left to hold the ship. However, they did hold. Men were now sent aloft to stop each yardarm of the topsails and courses with lightly-tied rope-yarns; and one man was left at each stop, with a strict charge to be watchful as well as obedient, and not to let a sail fall without orders. The yards were all braced sharp up for casting from the reef, and making sail on the starboard tack. The tacks and sheets, the topsail sheets, the main and mizen staysail-halyards were manned, the spring was brought to the capstan and hove in. The preparations were now fully

made, and Captain Hayes, praising his men for the alacrity they had hitherto shown, announced to them that now their life or death was in their own hands ; that the alternative depended on their own steadiness and prompt obedience. As he gave the word the cables were cut ; but the heavy sea, which beat on the larboard bow, would not allow the ship to cast that way. This danger the Captain had foreseen ; but when the sudden strain broke the spring, and the ship's head paid round towards the reef, the most skilful and the most fearless agreed in thinking that all was over. The Captain alone was as undaunted as ever ; his words of command followed quick but clear : to put the helm hard a-starboard : to sheet home the foretopsail, and haul on board the foretack and aft foresheet ; to keep all the other sails fast ; to square the main and mizen topsail and crossjack-yards ; to keep the mainyard as it was. Then, as the wind came abaft the beam, he bade the men sheet-home the mizen-topsail, and put the helm hard a-port. Again, when the wind came nearly aft, he ordered them to haul on board the maintack, the aft mainsheet, to sheet home the main-topsail, to brace the crossjackyard sharp up. The whole of these operations were performed in two minutes ; and, as they were completed, and the ship flew round from the reef, with her head towards the south, the Captain pronounced her safe. She had been brought completely round in less than her own length ; the trysails, the main and mizen staysails, had all been got ready for hoisting, but were not wanted. Sailors had been in the habit of taking it for granted that a ship with yards and top-masts struck, was disabled from making sail, except with staysails : but now the Magnificent was seen making her way through the storm under reefed courses and close-reefed topsails ; and the crew, who acknowledged that they owed their lives to the rare skill and presence of mind of the captain, believed also that he had originated a plan

which had never before occurred to the most experienced seaman. If he had originated it under such circumstances, it affords a splendid instance of the beneficial effects of danger upon minds of the highest stamp, which, while paralyzing inferior souls, it rouses to the conception and execution of deeds of which, under a less terrible pressure, even they would have been incapable. Nor, while the chief honour is deservedly given to the Captain, is the crew entitled to aught but the highest praise ; since their commander's inventive courage would have been useless, had he not been seconded by their loyal discipline and dauntless fortitude.

In the Mediterranean our operations were still confined to the coasts. On those of France and Italy, no enemy's vessel could show itself a mile from the land, without the imminent risk of being cut off ; and often and often our boats even went in and carried off or destroyed those that lay at anchor. On one occasion the boats of the two frigates, *Undaunted*, 32, Captain Thomas, and *Volontaire*, 38, Captain Bullen, the same officer whose humane intrepidity, after the battle of Camperdown, has been recorded in a former chapter,\* captured or destroyed the greater part of a large and valuable flotilla at the mouth of the Rhone. A small squadron, consisting at first of the *America*, 74, Captain Rowley, the *Leviathan*, of the same force, Captain Campbell, and the 18-gun brig, *Eclair*, Captain Bellamy ; and in which, after a time, the *America* was replaced by the two frigates, the *Impérieuse*, still under the command of Captain Duncan, and the *Curaçoa*, 36, Captain Tower, twice in May and June mastered the fortifications at Alassio and Languillia, and destroyed two large squadrons of well-laden coasting-vessels ; while Captain Napier, still in the Thames, with the aid of Captain Joseph Nicholas in the 18-gun brig *Pilot*, overpowered and destroyed the fort of Sapri, capturing nearly thirty vessels

\* See *ante*, p. 55.

with rich cargoes ; and, after Napier was removed into the *Euryalus*, 36, with the aid of Captain Mounsey, in the *Furieuse*, 36, and a battalion of the 10th Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Coffin, he, at the beginning of 1813, captured the island of Ponza in the Bay of Naples, which, though strongly fortified, did not cost him a single man, and was of great importance to our naval operations in that district, as having an excellent harbour, with a plentiful supply of water. He proceeded up the coast towards Toulon, and in May his boats, with those of the *Berwick*, stormed the batteries of Cavalaciè, and captured or destroyed twenty-three vessels, one of which was a 10-gun xebec, with a crew of ninety-five men. And, before the end of the summer, the same district was attacked by the boats of a yet more formidable force, which, under the command of Captain Jeremiah Coghlan, still as enterprising and audacious as when he captured the *Cerbère*, stormed the batteries\* at Cassis, and captured three gunboats and a large flotilla of merchant-vessels. Nor were these the only achievements of these active officers. In the last week of the year, and on the same day, Captain Napier destroyed a large store-ship, armed with twenty-two guns ; and Captain Coghlan, in the *Alcmène* frigate, captured a schooner almost equally powerful, carrying a reinforcement of troops to the garrison of Corsica.

In the Adriatic, the French were for awhile too much daunted by the result of the actions off Lissa to venture out of the reach of the batteries with which the Italian coast was lined at all accessible points ; but they often found their fortifications an insufficient protection. On one occasion, Captain Charles Rowley, of the *Eagle*, 74, sent in his boats, under the command of Mr. Cannon, his first-lieutenant, to attack a large flotilla of twenty-three trading-vessels, which were coasting along off Cape Maestro, under the protection of two gunboats. Lieutenant Cannon first

\* See *ante*, p. 167.

attacked the largest gunboat, with his whole force ; when he had captured her, he turned her guns upon her consort, and, having mastered her also, he employed his two prizes so skilfully against the convoy, which they had been intended to protect, that he took them all except two ; the only drawback to this brilliant success being, that he himself was mortally wounded in directing it. And in the next year, the boats of the same ship, in concert with those of the *Elizabeth*, 74, Captain Gower, captured or destroyed the greater part of a squadron of oil-laden merchantmen at Goro, though a well-served land-battery, two armed schooners, and three gunboats, all maintained a heavy fire on the assailants ; and though the conquerors had to force their way to the shore through a tremendous surf, in order to bring them off.

But, as in previous years, the brilliant services of all the other gallant officers in these waters were eclipsed by those of Captain Hoste. As was mentioned in the last chapter, he had scarcely reached England with his prizes, before he was sent back again, in the *Bacchante*, 88, a finer frigate than his old *Amphion* ; and, on reaching the Istrian coast, he at once renewed his attacks upon every enemy that he could hear of. He was lying off Rovigno, nearly opposite to Venice, when he learnt that a flotilla was at the neighbouring port of Lema, ready to sail with a valuable cargo of ship-timber. On the evening of the day on which he obtained this information, he despatched his boats, under Mr. O'Brien, his first-lieutenant, to bring them off ; and the lieutenant proved worthy of his captain. He first captured the merchant-vessels at the entrance of the port, and from them he learnt that the timber-ships were under the protection of a xebec, armed with three heavy guns, and two gunboats. He had no guns, and the necessity of leaving a prize-crew on board each of the captured traders, had reduced his boats' crews to fifty-five men : but he disregarded every consideration except that



of the order which he had received to capture the enemy ; and, having first boarded the armed vessels, and carried them, he afterwards captured the whole of the convoy ; and at daybreak the next morning, he brought them all out in triumph to the *Bacchante*. A fortnight later, with the same boats, he attacked a still more numerous and more valuable squadron lying on the Apulian coast, between Tremite and Vasto ; and, though they were protected by not fewer than eight gunboats, he captured them, gunboats and all, and brought off six-and-twenty vessels, with a loss of only two wounded men. The first week of the new year, 1813, the same officer, being on this occasion assisted also by two boats belonging to the *Weazel*, captured an entire squadron of four gunboats on their way from Corfu to Otranto : the triumph being rendered the more gratifying to the captain, by the circumstance that it was contributed to in no trivial degree by the presence of mind of his own son, then only a midshipman ; who, having been placed in command of the prize-crew in the gunboat which was first captured, perceiving that the others were making vigorous efforts to escape, fastened the hatches down over his prisoners, and then, with the guns of the prize, opened a fire on her consorts, which materially crippled their speed.

Hoste had made one or two more captures, when, in May, he learnt that another flotilla of trading-vessels was lying at Karlebago. Thither he sailed without delay ; but the wind was so unfavourable that, before he could reach the place, the prey he had hoped to seize had sailed. But, on examination, he thought the harbour, and the castle which defended it, too well placed to justify him in leaving them in their existing condition. He, accordingly, summoned the Governor to surrender ; and, on his refusal, brought the *Bacchante* within pistol shot of the castle, and, by a heavy cannonade, soon compelled him to submit. The guns he transferred to his own ship, the

works of the castle he blew up, and the Governor himself and his aide-de-camp he carried off as prisoners.

Another month had not elapsed, when he undertook a still more brilliant enterprise, which, had it not succeeded, might well have been supposed to have been beyond the strength of the boats of a single frigate to perform. Lieutenant O'Brien had been promoted after the action off Otranto, and the *Bacchante's* first-lieutenant was now Mr. Hood, who gallantly emulated the brilliant example of his predecessor. On the 12th of June, as the frigate was slowly proceeding down the Gulf, she descried a numerous flotilla under Gala Nuova, a small fortified town on the coast of the Abruzzi; the wind and the current were both against him; so, fearing lest his prey should escape him here, as at Karlebugo, he sent Hood forward with the boats, not giving him any positive orders to attack the enemy, but leaving it to his discretion to advance or to wait for the arrival of the ship, according to the dictates of a nearer examination of the enemy's force. Fearless as he was himself, he would not have blamed his lieutenant had he decided to wait; for, when that officer had approached near enough to ascertain the amount of resistance he was likely to encounter, he could reckon seven large, three smaller gunboats, and fourteen merchant-vessels, four of which had heavy guns in their bows; while the shore behind was lined by troops intrenched on the beach, with a couple of field-pieces. In the teeth, however, of this apparently overwhelming disparity of odds, Hood determined on an instant assault. The boats, as they advanced, were assailed with a ceaseless fire of grape and musketry, but they pulled on, drove the crews from the gunboats, while those of the merchantmen ran their vessels ashore. Hood next landed to attack the infantry on the beach; put them to flight, destroyed their field-pieces, and then, having with great labour got the merchantmen afloat,

brought them off, and rejoined the *Bacchante*, which the utmost exertions of those who had been left on board had not succeeded in yet bringing near enough the scene of action to aid her noble detachment.

Three weeks afterwards, as part of a larger squadron, under the command, first of Rear-Admiral Fremantle in the *Milford*, 74, and afterwards of Captain Rowley in the *Eagle*, the *Bacchante* bore an important part in the capture of Fiume and Rovigno, and in the destruction of all the batteries and guns at both these places. And in the autumn, while Admiral Fremantle was engaged in co-operating with the Austrians in the reduction of the important town of Trieste, Hoste, with Captain Harper of the *Saracen*, 18, under his orders, moved towards Cattaro. He had heard that the inhabitants of the district were weary of the exactions of the French garrisons who held their strongholds, and, having secured a good anchorage for the ships, he despatched Captain Harper with the boats, and two Sicilian gunboats which were eager to co-operate with him, to capture the gunboats lying at Cattaro, and the island of St. George, which was strongly fortified. The information of the state of feeling which prevailed among the natives proved wholly correct. The batteries on the island opened a heavy but harmless fire on the boats as they passed; and, the moment that Captain Harper arrived alongside the gunboats, which were manned by the people of the district, the crews hailed him as a deliverer. He hoisted English and Austrian colours in them, and, adding some of his own men to their crews, and taking possession also of a small fort at Persate, on the mainland, which commanded some of the fortifications of St. George, he attacked the island at daybreak, and in twenty minutes compelled the garrison of a hundred and forty men to surrender. Castel Nuovo, and Fort l'Espagnol on the mainland, with nearly three hundred more troops, capitulated in the morning.

And these successes were not without their influence on the impending invasion of France on its eastern frontier ; delivering Austria, as in a great degree they did, from apprehensions for the left flank of her advancing armies.

The year 1814, about to witness the close of this long war, was, for the brief period which remained before the termination of hostilities, even more disastrous to France than any of those recently passed : though it must be admitted that, in most of the instances in which her ships were forced to strike to the English flag, the force to which they yielded was so superior that, though vanquished, they lost no honour by their defeat. In January Rear-Admiral Durham, the gallant captain of the *Defiance* at Trafalgar, with his flag in Duncan's old ship, the *Venerable*, and the *Cyane*, 22, Captain Forrest, under his orders, was on his way to take the command of the Leeward Islands station ; and on the 16th had already reached the Canaries, when he fell in with two French 44-gun frigates, *L'Iphigénie* and *L'Alcmène*, returning to France from the coast of Africa, where they had acquired a rich booty by the capture of several of our merchantmen. On the last day of the preceding year he had captured a fine privateer, *Le Jason*, which in lightening herself, in the hopes of escape, had thrown over all her guns but two ; and with those two guns she now made a part of his squadron under the command of Lieutenant Moffat. The *Cyane* was the first to see the enemy : but the *Venerable*, though a line-of-battle ship, was so much the faster sailer, that she ran the *Cyane* almost out of sight, and came up with the frigates by herself. She summoned them to surrender ; but the *Alcmène*, the rearmost of the two, was commanded by a most gallant seaman, a relative of the brave and skilful officer who had commanded at Trafalgar, Captain Villeneuve. He, trusting to the fading light, for it was late in the afternoon when Admiral Durham

overtook him, the moment that the Venerable opened her fire upon him, put his helm up, and, under all sail, laid the line-of-battle ship on board in the hopes apparently of boarding her, and so mastering her by surprise. It was a gallant attempt, but Captain North of the Venerable turned it to his destruction. He too had his boarders ready, and, with the same movement with which he drove back the French crew, he poured his own men on the frigate's deck, and left her no choice but to strike her colours. The other frigate, keeping steadily on her way, had profited by the delay interposed by her consort's gallantry to increase the distance between herself and her pursuers; but, before she could get out of sight, the Cyane joined the flagship, and the Admiral sent her forward to watch the flying enemy till he himself should have repaired some injuries which his rigging had sustained in the brief struggle that had taken place with the enemy's boarders; the Venerable was soon refitted; and then Durham also followed in chase, keeping through the darkness in the same direction in which the frigates were going when first seen. So accurate were his calculations, that at the end of two days more he again came in sight of both the pursuers and the pursued. The Cyane and Jason had both maintained the chase with extreme perseverance, vigilance, and skill; both occasionally assailing the flying frigate with their guns, and suffering severe loss from her heavier broadside, though fortunately for them she was too anxious to secure her own safety to stop to bring them to a regular action. Nor, when the Venerable again came in sight, would she haul down her flag without still making an effort to save it. Being admirably handled, she still maintained her flight for more than a day; and, even when the line-of-battle ship finally overtook her, she made a gallant but a vain attempt to cripple her rigging before she surrendered.

Only a few days afterwards, two more French frigates

of the same class, L'Etoile and La Sultane, also fell into our hands. They were cruising off the Cape Verd islands, when on the 23rd of January they fell in with the Astræa, Captain Eveleigh, and Creole, Captain Mackenzie, British frigates of as nearly as possible the same force as themselves. We chased them; and, though they would willingly have avoided an encounter, their captains were men too brave and honorable to flee from it. As the English frigates came up a sudden squall split the topsails of the Astræa, but the accident scarcely delayed her; and a fierce action ensued, in which she selected the Etoile for her antagonist, while the Creole attacked the Sultane. Each pair of combatants came to such close quarters that the Creole was more than once set on fire by the French wads, and Captain Eveleigh in the Astræa fell shot through the heart by a pistol from the Etoile. We lost above eighty men killed and wounded; the French are believed to have had a still greater number disabled: the masts and rigging of our ships, too, were greatly injured. The Astræa lost her mizenmast, and the Creole's foremast was tottering. The Sultane too had lost her mizenmast, and the Etoile, though her damages were less visible, was also much crippled. At last, after the contest had lasted nearly three hours, the French made sail and retreated. As they were retiring, the Sultane's maintopmast was seen to go over the side: but we were in no condition to pursue her, and the French captains appeared to have reason to congratulate themselves on an event of such rare occurrence in their service as a drawn battle with English ships of equal force.

The remaining masts of both these ships were badly wounded: but, eager to complete the period allowed them for their cruise, they repaired their damages at sea as well as they could, and did not return towards their own harbours till the latter end of March. They were never

destined to reach them at all. On the 26th of that month they were approaching St. Malo, when they were met by a British squadron, consisting of the *Hannibal*, 74, Sir M. Seymour; the *Hebrus*, a frigate of their own size, under the command of Captain Palmer, and the 16-gun brig *Sparrow*, Captain Lock. Sir Michael gave chase, taking the *Sultane* to himself, and sending the other two vessels after the *Etoile*. When the *Hannibal* once reached the *Sultane*, any resistance on the part of the latter was, of course, hopeless; but the *Etoile* again fought most gallantly with the *Hebrus*. Fleeing, as she might do without shame from a superior force, she led her pursuer a chase of fifteen hours, during which she ran 120 miles, before he could bring her to action in La Hogue Bay. As he came up with her, to prevent her ultimate escape, Captain Palmer passed between her and the shore; and, though the position which he thus took up was full of danger, since he was within musket-shot of the land, and since the well-directed fire of the French soon shot away his foretopmast and foreyard, crippled his mainmast and bowsprit, and cut to pieces almost every shroud, stay, and brace in the ship, he displayed such resources of seamanship as to prevent the damage from being attended by any evil consequences during the action; and, directing his fire mainly at his antagonist's hull, soon shot away her mizenmast by the board, and reduced her to a condition much more unmanageable than his own. After an almost ceaseless cannonade had been maintained between the two combatants for more than two hours the *Etoile* struck. Her hull was so riddled that she had four feet of water in her hold, and she had lost forty men killed and seventy-one wounded. The killed and wounded of the English sailors did not together exceed thirty-eight men. The action was honorable to both frigates. To the *Hebrus*, because she gained the victory, though so close to the enemy's shore that, while securing her prize, she was exposed to a heavy

cannonade from a land-battery, which, while the action was continued, could not fire without doing as much harm to the French frigate as to her antagonist; but which, as soon as the *Etoile* had passed into our possession, opened a most formidable fire upon both her and her conqueror. To the *Etoile*, because her previous action with the *Astræa* had reduced her crew nearly to a level with that of the *Hebrus*, and because the knowledge of the neighbourhood of the *Hannibal* and *Sparrow* could hardly fail to have a discouraging influence on her efforts.

In another action in which an English frigate single-handed captured a French ship of the same nominal force, the French officers can again point to circumstances which exempt their defeat from disgrace in the unusual armament of their conqueror. The war, in which, as will be presently mentioned, we were now engaged with the United States had taught us the necessity of giving some of our frigates a heavier armament than we had been accustomed to place in ships of that class; and, among others, the *Eurotas*, 46, which had been recently launched, was equipped with 24-pounders instead of 18-pounders, and her carronades, as however had not been unusual before, threw a ball of thirty-two pounds. With this heavy armament she proved also a vessel of great speed and handiness, and had already made several prizes, when, on the 25th of February, she fell in with the French frigate *Clorinde*, 44, a very fine and powerful vessel, but armed on the old scale with 18-pounders, and carronades of twenty-four pounds. The *Eurotas* at once gave chase: and, though the Frenchman had first tried to escape, as soon as he found that he was outsailed he accepted the inevitable encounter with great courage and skill, which were greatly favoured by fortune. Nelson had been wont to say that nothing was more liable to accident than a naval battle, because a chance-shot might carry away a mast or otherwise disable a ship. And so it chanced in this instance



that the very first broadside fired by the *Clorinde* shot away the mizenmast of the *Eurotas*, and prevented her commander, Captain Phillimore, from laying his antagonist aboard as he had designed to do, or from executing any other manœuvre. Once he succeeded in raking her, but generally the action was carried on broadside to broadside; and, from this time forth, with apparently equal effect on both sides. The two remaining masts of the *Eurotas* went by the board; and she, on her part, succeeded in beating down the mizenmast and mainmast of the *Clorinde*.

It was clear, though our ship was apparently in the worst condition, being wholly dismasted, that the French ship had really been the greatest sufferer, or else that her crew were more easily disheartened, since she now took advantage of the superiority in sailing which the preservation of her foremast gave her to make sail on it and try to escape. Our loss in men had been heavy: twenty were killed, thirty-nine wounded, including the captain himself, whose shoulder had been severely torn by a grape-shot: so that, in the latter part of the action, he was forced to relinquish the command to the First-lieutenant, Mr. R. Smith. Succeeding as he did to the command of a disabled ship, this officer displayed the greatest energy and skill. Though unable to prevent the temporary escape of the enemy, by means of some boatsails and a jigger on the ensign-staff, he contrived to keep her in sight throughout the night, and the next morning he rigged jurmasts and got up so much sail that the *Eurotas* was going above six knots an hour before the *Clorinde* had finished clearing away her wreck. Two hours more would have again brought the antagonists together, in which the still crippled condition of the French frigate would have wholly disabled her from resisting an assailant who had repaired most of his damages, when, to the bitter mortification of the crew of the *Eurotas*, they were deprived, not indeed of their prize, but of the ap-

parent honour of being her actual captors, by the arrival on the scene of another frigate, the *Dryad*, 36, Captain E. Galway. On receiving a single shot from the *Dryad* the *Clorinde* struck. It was plain, however, that the enemy which had subdued her was the *Eurotas*. Nothing could exceed the astonishment of the French sailors when, an hour afterwards, she came up fit for service; and Captain Galway, though senior to Captain Phillimore, frankly attributed to him the whole credit of the victory.

Once or twice, as in the case of the *Regulus*, 74, at the mouth of the Gironde, the French surrendered or destroyed their ships without attempting to save them, and, altogether, in the short period of the year 1814 which elapsed before the conclusion of peace, they lost not fewer than nine line-of-battle ships and frigates, besides smaller vessels, without being able to retaliate on us by the capture of one. But the operations of the navy, which, during the latter years of the war, had the most real influence upon its issue, were perhaps not its numerous victories over single ships, or even over squadrons, so much as those less showy labours of our sailors while co-operating with the army with which Wellington was gradually but surely expelling from the Spanish peninsula the enormous host that Napoleon had spread over every province of the kingdom which he had bestowed upon his brother. From his first assumption of the command our invincible General\* attached the greatest value to the co-operation of our fleet, even expressing a belief that if, as he at first sometimes expected, his army should be compelled to evacuate the country by the enemy, or if, as he more frequently feared, it should be withdrawn by our Ministers, the resistance to the French might still be kept alive by our fleet; since there were many places on the coast of Spain, especially

\* 'Wellington Despatches,' *passim*, especially letters to Admiral Berkeley, Sir R. Keats, Sir H. Popham, and Sir G. Collier.

on its eastern side, where a fleet in alliance with them might render the most efficient aid to the Spanish armies, whether of regular troops or of guerrillas. Great, too, as was his reliance on his own infantry, he exceedingly desired the assistance of a brigade of seamen and marines, which he affirmed would increase his available strength in a degree out of all proportion to the number of which the brigade might consist. The Admiralty, however, refused their consent to this plan; and the assistance which he obtained was confined to what could be rendered by the ships and their boats.

That assistance, however, was always zealously and promptly furnished in the direction which he suggested. In the spring of 1810, there was perhaps nothing which prevented the French Marshals from operating on Lisbon, so much as the presence in the Tagus of our fleet, which Wellington had begged Admiral Berkeley to bring thither with that express object. And it was certainly through the judicious despatch of the boats under Rear-Admiral Sir J. Williams, up the river to Valada, that General Hill was enabled to cross it in safety, and to protect Abrantes, the loss of which would have proved of the most serious consequence, by opening to the French the resources of the Alentejo. The brilliant descent too on Moguer made by General Lacey, with his Spanish division, in the summer of the same year, was only rendered possible by the aid he received from Sir R. Keats, who sent Captain G. Cockburn with a squadron, which first conveyed the troops to the point which the General had selected as his landing-place, and then accompanied them as they marched along the shore, protecting their line of advance with the boats, and transporting them across a wide river.

The next year, a squadron on the eastern coast, under the command of Captain Codrington, vindicated Wellington's foresight by the aid which it afforded both to the besieged garrisons of the Spaniards, and to their armies in the field.

Codrington could not, indeed, save Tarragona from Suchet, but he materially delayed its fall by the reinforcements which he conveyed to that unhappy city in his ships; and, by the supplies of all kinds which he carried to O'Donnell and Mina in Valencia, he enabled those Generals to take the field, and secured the co-operation of the armies of that kingdom and Aragon. And again, when Oropesa fell in the autumn, Captain G. Eyre, of the *Magnificent*, belonging to the same squadron, succeeded in bringing off the garrison, so that the besieging army got nothing but the place itself.

Our own armies, however, never approached the coasts of Catalonia or Valencia. Malaga was still more out of their way; but there also our ships afforded important aid to the guerilla chiefs, and a small squadron under the command of Captain Usher, of the *Hyacinthe*, co-operated most powerfully with Ballasteros's division, destroying the French works at Nersa and Almunecar, and other points along the coast; and, while the Spanish cavalry advanced by the mountain-passes, transporting their infantry in the ships to the points most open to assault. By these operations the enemy were entirely driven from that province, and were weakened not only by the loss of men which they sustained through the capture of their batteries, but by that of a great number of Germans and Flemings, who had been compelled to serve in the French regiments, but who gladly took advantage of the reverses of their masters, and of the protection afforded by our ships, to desert the service into which they had been unwillingly forced.

After the French had been finally expelled from Portugal, our ships were no longer needed in the Tagus: and from that time it was on the northern coast that our squadrons were in the most immediate communication with our armies. When, after the great Victory of Salamanca, Wellington began to force his way with serious purpose towards the north, our sailors at the same time found for themselves a

wider sphere of operations in securing his communications, and embarrassing the movements of the enemy; and a fortnight had not elapsed after the battle, before Wellington reported that a squadron, under the command of Sir Home Popham, was not only perplexing the enemy by compelling him to fix his attention on the Biscayan coast, but that it had even contributed in some degree to the victory itself, since by it Caffarelli had been prevented from detaching some troops to Marmont's assistance; and that the French General had even been forced, by the necessity of watching Sir Home's movements, to recall one division which he had actually sent to join the Marshal. Indeed, there was no time when that squadron was more actively employed than in the very week when the great battle was fought on the Tormes. In the preceding autumn, Sir G. Collier, with the *Surveillante* and another frigate, had driven the French from the works commanding the anchorage of Bermeo, and had destroyed the batteries which were calculated to be most mischievous to any ships which we might bring thither, while Captain R. Mends, still in the *Arethusa*, with a small squadron destroyed all the batteries on the coast between Santander and St. Sebastian, making prisoners of the French garrisons, and carrying off above a hundred guns. And now, Sir Home, profiting by his brother officer's exploits, brought his squadron into the Bermeo Roads, to co-operate with the Spaniards in an attack on Bilbao; destroyed all the fortifications on each side of the entrance to the Bilbao river, and four or five strongly-placed and well-armed forts and castles lying a little further from the sea; and, in short, so completely deprived the French of all the means on which they relied for maintaining their occupation of that part of the coast, that, when, six weeks later, the Spanish General, Renovales, found himself strong enough to attack the town of Bilbao itself, the French had literally no means whatever of resisting him, but evacuated the town and retired to

Durango, where, at least, they were out of the reach of any enterprises of our seamen.

As the war approached the frontier of France, the aid rendered to our army by our squadron on the northern coast of Spain became still more important; Sir G. Collier not only cut off the whole of the communications of the enemy from Bayonne to Santona, but, in the great siege of St. Sebastian, which General Rey so long defended with such heroic skill, he played a most active part, since the capture of the island of Santa Clara, at the mouth of the harbour, was almost entirely the work of the boats of the squadron. They were placed under the command of Sir George's first-lieutenant, Mr. Arbuthnot, who, though the only landing-place was under a flight of steps, commanded by an intrenchment, and exposed to the fire of the whole range of batteries on the western side of St. Sebastian, stormed it with irresistible gallantry; and immediately brought on shore a number of the *Surveillante's* heaviest guns, and erected a battery on the island to enfilade the works of the fortress. The battery was constructed and served wholly by seamen from the squadron: it soon silenced the guns opposed to it; and from that time the progress of the siege was rapid. Santa Clara was taken on the 27th of August, and on the 8th of September General Rey surrendered: our rapid progress during the latter stages of the siege having been, by the cordial acknowledgment of Sir Thomas Graham and Wellington, greatly facilitated by this brilliant achievement of our sailors. And, after we had entered France, a squadron, under the command of Rear-Admiral Penrose, did almost equal service; the boats forcing their way up the Adour, in spite of the great difficulties caused by the shoals and sandbanks at the mouth of the river. It was blowing hard, and the surf on the bar was so high, that some of the boats were upset, and many seamen were drowned; but the main body surmounted the difficulties;

made their way up the stream; and, by securing the passage of Sir John Hope's whole division to the northern bank, enabled that officer to complete the investment of Bayonne. As the army advanced, the fleet advanced with it; and, while Wellington was marching on Toulouse, and when Sir W. Beresford was established in Bordeaux, the Rear-Admiral gave no small security to his position in that city, by sending his boats up the Garonne, which captured or destroyed an entire flotilla of sixteen gun-boats and other armed vessels; and thus obtained the entire command of the largest river in that district.

In the north of Europe, too, our fleet exerted a powerful pressure on Napoleon's armies, as soon as the renewal of war between France and Russia, in the summer of 1812, led those armies towards the coasts of the North and Baltic seas. Peace had hardly been signed between the latter Power and Great Britain, when Rear-Admiral Martin was sent with a squadron to assist in the defence of Riga; which he had no small share in saving from the division which Marshall Macdonald led against it. And the siege of that town had hardly been raised, when a demonstration was made by the Admiral against Dantzic, which delayed for some weeks the onward march of a detachment of the Grand Army, which would otherwise have joined its comrades in time to take part in the hardly-fought conflict of Borodino. Again, while Wellington was forcing his way through the south of France, and the Swedish army was menacing its north-eastern frontier, a squadron under Captain Farquhar, of the *Désirée*, bore at least an equal share with that army in the reduction of Gluckstadt, a fortress of great strength on the Elbe, about half-way between Hamburg and the mouth of the river. The *Désirée* herself drew too much water to ascend the river; but her seamen were employed, as those of the *Surveillante* had been at Santa Clara, in landing her heaviest guns, constructing batteries with them on shore, and securing

them there ; while the vessels of smaller draught were also strengthened with some of her 18-pounders, and with a flotilla of gunboats, sent up under the walls of the town. From our gunboats and batteries, as from others erected by the Swedish army, a tremendous cannonade was opened on the first day of the new year. One of our batteries was served with red-hot shot, and set the fortifications, and the town behind them, on fire in several places. But General Cernikoff, who commanded the French garrison, was worthy of his post ; he, too, had abundance of heavy batteries and a flotilla of gunboats at his disposal : and he replied to our fire with great vigour for six days ; till his boats were battered to pieces, half the guns on the walls dismounted, and the town almost destroyed.

Three months afterwards, the restoration of the ancient Royal Family of France re-established peace between that country and ourselves. It was rudely interrupted for a brief period in the ensuing year ; but the war of the Hundred Days made no demand worth mentioning on our navy. Since the year 1814, the fleets of the two nations have never been arrayed against one another. But more than once they have been found acting in concert ; in every instance with success ; and in every instance for the promotion of the best interests of Europe, and of general civilisation. In such friendship and union, each people has learnt to appreciate the high qualities of the other, judging its ally with a candour which it could perhaps hardly be expected to exert towards an enemy ; and we may hope, that the mutual respect thus engendered may tend to the preservation of an alliance, which, while it subsists, must ever secure the peace of the world from any long interruption, and which is therefore of the most inestimable importance to every interest of humanity.



## APPENDIX.

DESPATCH of ADMIRAL GANTEAUME, the French Commander-in-chief (after the death of Admiral Brueys).

[The spelling of the original MS. is adhered to. The original is in the British Museum.]

*Pièces du Combat entre l'Armée Navale Française et celle Britannique, aux ordres de Contre-Amiral Nelson, dans la soirée et la nuit du 14 au 15 Thermidor, an 6 de la République.*

A deux heures du soir le vaisseau l'Heureux signala 12 voiles à l'O.N.O. ; nos vigils les apperçurent en même tems, et en comptèrent successivement jusqu'à 16. On ne tarda pas à reconnaître ces bâtimens pour une escadre Anglaise, composée de 14 vaisseaux et 2 bricks.

Les ennemis faisant route forçaient de voiles pour ce mouillage de l'armée, ayant un brick à sonder devant. Le vent était au nord, joli frais.

Les bricks l'Alceste et le Railleur avaient eu ordre de mettre sous voile, et de se lever au vent, pour empêcher la manœuvre de cette mouche. Les signaux de branle bas, et de se préparer au combat, prévenir l'armée qu'elle combattra à l'ancre, rappeler les équipages à leurs bords respectifs, avaient eu lieu à trois heures. Les chaloupes qui étaient à l'aiguade avaient également été rappellées, un canot de l'Artémise avait été détaché sur les bancs de Rosette, pour prévenir les transports qui y étaient monillés de l'apparition de l'ennemi ; et enfin les frégates et les corvettes avaient eu ordre de verser leurs équipages sur les vaisseaux.

L'escadre ennemi continuait de s'avancer sur tous voiles, après avoir donné un grand tour aux brisans qui bordaient l'isle. Elle avait tenu le vent, diminué de voiles, et annonçait le dessein d'attaquer notre armée. A cinq heures trois quarts la batterie de l'islot avaient jetté quelques bombs qui portaient sur les vaisseaux de tête de la ligne ennemie. A six heures moins quelques minutes, le Général avait fait le signal de commencer le combat, et peu de tems après les deux avantgardes se combattaient.

Plusieurs vaisseaux ennemis, ayant diminué tout à coup de voiles, avaient doublé la tête de notre ligne, et mouillant leurs ancrs avec le cable par derrière, avaient élongée en draguant notre ligne du côté de terre, tandis que les autres mouillaient,

à porté de pistolet, de l'autre bord. Par cette manœuvre tous nos vaisseaux jusqu'au Tonnant se trouvaient enveloppés.

Il nous parut que deux vaisseaux, en exécutant cette manœuvre, avaient échoués, mais l'un d'eux ne tarda pas à se retirer. L'attaque et la défense furent extrêmement vives. Toutes les vaisseaux de tête jusqu'à notre matelot derrière, étaient pris des deux bords et souvent par la hanche. Dans ce désordre, et enveloppé d'un nuage continuel de fumée, il eut été difficile de distinguer les mouvemens de la ligne. Au commencement de l'action l'Amiral, tous les officiers majors, le commissaire ordonnateur, et une vingtaine de timoniers ou autres transports se trouvaient sur la dunette occupés à la mousqueterie. Tous les soldats, les hommes mêmes de la manœuvre, étaient descendus aux batteries par ordre de l'Amiral. A celle de douze il manquait plus de la moitié de son équipage.

Après une heure d'action le Général fut blessé à la figure et à la main, et étant descendu alors à la dunette il fut renversé et tué quelque tems après sur le gaillard-derrière. Obligé de continuer à nous battre des deux bords, on avait abandonné la batterie de douze, mais celles de 24 et de 36 continuaient leur feu avec la plus grande ardeur. Le Franklin et le Tonnant nous paraissaient être dans une position aussi critique que la nôtre.

Les vaisseaux ennemis ayant exterminé nos vaisseaux de tête, se laissaient deriver en draguant, et prenaient divers positions autour de nous. Nous par la tête obligés à filer divers fois du cable ou du grélin pour leur présenter le travers. Un vaisseau cependant ennemi nous combattant par tribord et presque à toucher, avait déjà été démâté de tout mat, et, ne tirant plus, avait coupé son cable pour se retirer du feu, mais obligés à nous défendre contre deux autres, nous foudroyaient par la tranche de labord et de bossoir de tribord, en avait été obligé de refiler du cable. La défense des batteries de 36 et 24 continuait avec vivacité quand le feu se manifesta sur la dunette par une explosion. Nous avions déjà eu le feu dans un bateau, et, ayant fait couper l'ancre, nous nous en étions préservés. Un hamack et des débris inflammés avaient également été jettés à la mer. A cette troisième fois le feu avait fait dans un instant des progrès rapides, et dévora parmi tous les débris dont la dunette était couverte. Les pompes d'incendie avaient été brisés par les boulets, les vailles, et les sceaux.

L'ordre de cesser le feu des batteries *renvers*, pour que tout

le monde se porte à faire passer de l'eau, avait été donné, mais l'ardeur était telle que dans la tumulte la batterie de 36 continuait son feu ; quoique tous les officiers ordonnassent de faire monter tout le monde en haut, l'incendie avait fait en peu de tems de progrès désespérans, et nous avions peu de moyens à lui opposer.

Notre grand mât et celui d'Artémon étaient tombés, et bientôt nous ne vîmes plus de salut pour le vaisseau : le feu ayant gagné tout le gaillard-derrière et même la batterie de douze. Le capitaine du vaisseau et son second étaient blessés depuis quelques tems. Le Général Ganteaume alors donna l'ordre d'ouvrir les rabinets et d'abandonner le vaisseau.

Le feu avait pris à environ 10 heures moins un quart, et à dix et demi le vaisseau sauta en l'air, quoiqu'on ait eu la précaution d'ouvrir les rabinets. Partie de l'équipage se sauva sur les débris, et d'autres y périrent.

Le combat continua toute la nuit à l'arrière garde, et au jour nous distinguâmes que Le Guerrier, Le Conquérant, Le Spartiate, L'Aiglon, Le Peuple Souverain, et Le Franklin, avaient amené et s'étaient rendus à l'ennemi. Le Tonnant démâté de tous mâts était à queue, son pavillon haut ; L'Heureux et Le Mercure échoués furent combattus et forcés d'amener dans la matinée. L'Artémise brûlait à huit heures du matin, et La Sérieuse était coulée par le travers du vaisseau de tête. Le Guillaume Tell, Le Généreux, Le Timoléon, La Diane, et La Justice, leurs pavillons haut, se cannonèrent avec quelques vaisseaux Anglais une partie de la matinée ; mais cette division, à l'exception du Timoléon, mit à la voile à 10 ou 11 heures du matin, et poussa au large. Le Timoléon se jeta sur la côte, et nous avons appris depuis que le capitaine, après avoir sauvé tout son équipage, incendia, le 16 au matin, ce vaisseau pour empêcher qu'il ne devînt le proie de l'ennemi.

Tels ont été les résultats de cette horrible affaire, et nous les avons tracés tels qu'ils se sont présentés à notre mémoire, n'ayant pu conserver aucun ni note écrite.

(Signé) LE CONTRE-AMIRAL GANTEAUME.

*Alexandria, le 18 Thermidor, an 6.*

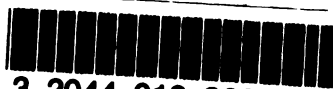
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